THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 6 October, 1924 Number 10

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By P. BRAUN

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By C. M. ROEBUCK

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After the Hull Congress

By A DELEGATE

Published at

162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON, S.W. 1

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VOLUME 6 OCTOBER, 1924 NUMBER 10

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Published at
162 Buckingham Palace Road
London
S.W.1

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The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices:

162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE RD., S.W.1

Telephone: VICTORIA 9193.

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Advertising Rates:

Ordinary (unspecified) position, £5 5s. per page, and *pro rata*.

Special position (facing matter), £7 7s. Cover, £8 8s. Small advertisements on last page of text, £1 1s. per inch. Discount for series.

Volume V (July to December, 1923) can be supplied for 7s. 6d. post free, or these numbers can be bound and returned post free for 4s. 6d.

Cases can be supplied for 3s. 6d. post free.

Title Page for Volume V can be had on application if 1½d. for postage is sent.

VOLUME VI

At the request of numerous subscribers, THE LABOUR MONTHLY will in future be bound in annual volumes instead of six-monthly as heretofore. The present volume will accordingly cover all issues during 1924, and no index will appear until the publication of the December issue.

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NOTES of the MONTH

A Vital Discussion—The Left Wing—Conditions Favourable—Mass Movement and Leaders—A Grave Failure—"Agents of the Bourgeoisie"—"Talking Down" to the Masses—Centrist Confusion—The Cardinal Error—False Lefts—Fruitful Lefts—What is a Left Wing?—Does It Differ from the Right?—Compromises and Compromises—Disrupters, not Uniters

AN article by Philips Price in a recent issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY[1] touched on the whole question of the "Left Wing" in British Labour politics. We make no apology for returning to this article in view of the discussion that it has raised. The discussion was continued in a subsequent issue[2] from another point of view by J. R. Campbell, to which a reply by Price has already appeared elsewhere. The series of articles[3] initiated by W. H. Hutchinson, and contributed to by members of the Labour Party Executive and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, has thrown a light on another aspect of the same question; while the recent holding of the National Minority Conference has brought into relief the possibility of an organised unofficial movement. It should now be possible to take stock of the various tendencies that exist and of the possibilities to which they point. It is of extreme value that this whole question should be discussed in the most open possible manner.

THERE exist at present many signs and tendencies and individual expressions which are loosely spoken of as "left wing." The term is used very vaguely, and it is necessary to ask what it means. When there are proposals afoot to organise or develop a "left wing" movement, it may mean one of two things. It may mean in practice an attempt to create under the name of a left wing in fact a new party on a centrist basis. Such a proposition we may rule out at once as out of the question: were it to be seriously made, it would be manifestly only adding to the

[1] Volume VI, No. 7, July, 1924. [2] Volume VI, No. 8, August, 1924.
[3] Volume VI, Nos. 1—8.

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existing confusion and would have to be fought unreservedly as the most reactionary step that could be taken for the British working-class movement. But it may also mean, and can be more generally taken to mean, an attempt to create a wider mass movement, embracing all workers prepared to fight on definite immediate issues on which it is possible to unite, as a stage in the development of the whole movement. This is the sense in which the possibility of a "left wing" movement is of very great importance in this country to-day.

THERE is no question that the present conditions are favourable to the development of a wider mass movement. The mass of the workers are slowly awakening in this country as in other countries. The bankruptcy of bourgeois politics, the pressure of economic conditions and unemployment and the danger of renewed war are driving the workers and the lower middle class to look to more radical solutions. On the basis of this the ruling group which constitutes the present Labour Party leadership has been able to raise itself to power. But the very fact of their coming to power compels them to reveal themselves as nothing but another version of bourgeois rule with no possibility of fundamental change. Wider and wider circles of workers are compelled to realise the need of something more. The direct economic struggle of the trade unions has brought this point even more rapidly, the recognition of the exhaustion of the old methods of advancement within capitalism and the necessity of facing the struggle with the whole forces of the bourgeoisie or falling into impotence. The practical treachery, whether conscious or unconscious, of the old leadership, its more and more open coalition with the bourgeoisie, its fundamental inability to help the masses, open the road to new forces. The process may be slow. As Price correctly points out, the mass of the workers, so far as they are becoming conscious, still, on the whole, place their confidence in the Labour Government (though every day diminishes the truth of this). But the process is inevitable. The Liberal Government of 1906 was for a long time able to hold the support of the masses, though at a diminishing rate. But the eventual discrediting and

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crumbling was none the less inevitable. Therefore the question of the Opposition in the Labour Party and its character is of the greatest importance.

IN speaking of a "Left Wing" we must distinguish very sharply the movement of the leaders and the movement of the masses. The gradual groping of larger and larger masses of workers towards a policy of fundamental change is the most important fact in the present period. Such an evolution must necessarily pass through many phases, try many false paths and become disillusioned, and take on many forms of vague and confused semi-revolutionary expression before assuming the full consciousness and confidence of the revolutionary working class. In this sense the development of a left wing is a necessary and all-important phase. It is also true that those who seek to perform the task of leaders must march with the mass and show themselves able to point the path immediately ahead, and not simply a remote and abstract future. But it is none the less true that those leaders who show themselves *only* capable of giving expression to the passing left-wing tendency, and who therefore (whether through natural temperament and inability to see more clearly or because they believe these the correct tactics to pursue) commit their credit as leaders to the vague, confused, halting, half and half and therefore invariably false views of the actual situation which are the hall-mark of a left wing in a reformist movement, by so doing not only condemn themselves as leaders for the future, but also are hindering and thwarting, and not assisting, the development of the masses. If they do this through natural inability they reveal themselves at the mercy of the same illusions as the masses they seek to lead. If they do it through a belief in tactics, they are committing the gravest mistake in tactics that a revolutionary can commit, the failure of confidence in the masses and the failure of confidence in the power of revolutionary truth.

NOW this is the first great outstanding fact in Price's article which overrides all the issues that he raises, because it determines them all. The other issues can be discussed later. But this character must be nailed down first, because in it

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Price has given unconscious expression to the deepest and most universal weakness of the British movement, and in doing so has passed over, for the space of this article at least, from Marxism to "Englishness." Price writes:—

> It is no use clothing oneself in a sackcloth and ashes and going about croaking like ravens that the Labour Government has sold the workers to the bourgeoisie and that all is lost. Such tactics will only make the group that does this ridiculous, and nothing kills in English politics so easily as ridicule. A general Jeremiad on the record of the Labour Party in the last six months is not likely to go down with those who have been receiving some benefit, however slight, from increased unemployment pay and lower sugar taxes.

He therefore goes on to argue that our policy should be, instead of talking about "agents of the bourgeoisie," to confine ourselves to proposals of "practical measures" and to specific pieces of criticism, such as over the Soudan, the five cruisers, &c., and to make no general or "personal" attacks on the Labour Government or Labour Ministers as a whole. Now there is in all this an important issue which needs discussing, and to which there is a definite answer: namely, that all the specific issues in the world, Soudan, cruisers and all the rest, are of null and zero importance in comparison with the central question of the position of the Labour Government in the struggle of the working class and the bourgeoisie, and that all the detail questions in fact follow from that and only have significance in relation to it. But this is not the point that is at present important to consider. What is necessary to step back and look at hard in this case is the type of argument, the *method* of argument that is here revealed.

IF Price were only concerned to point out that we should not use the phrase "agents of the bourgeoisie" because the phrase has no effect on English ears, because it sounds in English, owing to the lack of conscious understanding and experience behind it, like a piece of insincere conventional jargon, and therefore ridiculous, he would be making a point of definite importance. It would be a stylistic point, not a political point; but stylistic points can be of very great importance in propaganda, particularly in the present situation in this country, where it might almost be said

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that half the problem of Marxist propaganda in England is the problem of finding a suitable language. The conclusion would then be that we should endeavour to find a more suitable and effective way of bringing home to the workers so that they cannot fail to understand what we mean when we say that the Labour Ministers are acting as agents of the bourgeoisie. But this is not Price's argument. Price's argument is that we should abandon the fact because the expression might seem ridiculous. In other words, he uses a stylistic argument to determine a political policy. He does not discuss whether or not the Labour Government is acting as the agent of the bourgeoisie. Instead he points out that we cannot say this, because it would appear ridiculous, "and nothing kills in English politics so easily as ridicule." The English bourgeoisie may indeed sleep quiet in their beds, since they have only to cast a little ridicule over dangerous thoughts and the good English revolutionaries will steer clear of them. It does not occur to Price that this self-same "ridicule," this fear of being laughed at, the fear, that is, of passing outside the set bounds of ordered thoughts, is the most familiar traditional weapon of every ruling class, and that capitulation to it is exactly a vast unconscious symbolic form of capitulation to the bourgeoisie; that so far from not treating the Labour Ministers as agents of the bourgeoisie, this is precisely what *in fact* it is necessary to make clear, even though the manner of our propaganda must be such as to achieve its purpose and not give the effect of a shibboleth, and that if fear of being laughed at holds us back from making a clear statement of the position (surely, one feels, an argument of this character at a critical point could only have appeared in an English magazine article), then we shall never achieve anything.

BUT there is very much more involved in it than this. For Price goes on to argue that *because* the workers have received increased unemployment benefit and lower sugar taxes, *therefore* it is impossible to tell the workers that the Labour Government is betraying them to the bourgeoisie. And here in this moment is revealed the political meaning of what seemed to be a mere stylistic argument; the capitulation, which seemed at first simply to take the æsthetic form of a desire not to appear

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" ridiculous," is revealed as a political capitulation. For Price does not argue that because the Labour Government has granted increased unemployment benefit and lower sugar taxes, therefore it is not betraying them to the bourgeoisie. He knows that such an argument is impossible to defend. He knows that the Liberal Government of 1906 could show much more " benefits " to the workers in the shape of pensions, insurance, trade union rights, &c., and yet be handing over the workers to the slavery of imperialism and finance capital, and that the task of a working-class advocate was to denounce it in spite of the " benefits." He knows that the imperialist and financial policy of the Labour Government can have a hundred times more effect on the lives of the workers and their families than any amount of reduced sugar taxes and increased unemployment benefit. But though he can understand these things himself, he does not think that the workers can understand them. He does not think that it is the first duty of a revolutionary in this position to tell the workers that if they let increased unemployment benefit and lower sugar taxes lull them into a sense of false security and confidence, while the major issues of government and imperialism and finance and war are being settled along absolute bourgeois lines, then they are heading straight for disaster—and to tell them so even against their first feelings, in the sure confidence that they will understand as time goes on by the very force of facts. And it is this lack of confidence in the masses, this lack of revolutionary confidence, this continual belief in the necessity of only stating half a position and " talking down " to the masses, that is the innermost character of the whole " left wing " school to which Price is here giving expression, and which necessarily leads to the sense of isolation and helplessness and vacillation, and so inevitably to continual capitulation to the ruling class and their lieutenants (" the psychological atmosphere necessary to impress the Labour Party Right Wing and the careerist element which is among them ").

FROM this inevitably follows the confusion of judgment which is unable any longer to view the actual facts of the situation with clearness, and insensibly becomes, not only practically and politically, but also ideologically, at the mercy of

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the ruling section; which endeavours to persuade itself that the Labour Government is good in parts and bad in parts (as if it were possible to be on both sides of the class struggle at once); which argues that the Labour Party "may" become treacherous, like the German Social Democratic Party, and "may not," but has not yet gone the way of that "miserable" party (as if the British Labour leaders have not publicly proclaimed and feasted and celebrated their unity with the British Tirpitzes and Ludendorffs and every design of British Imperialism every bit as openly and even more openly than the German Social Democrats); which actually tries to believe that a Labour Cabinet, containing the old fox of Liberal Imperialism, Haldane, and the Conservative Imperialist ex-Viceroy, Chelmsford, as full members without reservation, has not entered into any form of coalition with the bourgeoisie; which holds forward as "the only hopeful method of attacking British capitalism" "the capture by stages of the parliamentary and administrative machinery of capitalism"; which concludes a crushing indictment of the Dawes Report with—a pathetic appeal to the Labour Bureau of the League of Nations; and which, in fact, in every line and phrase reveals all the most familiar traits of just that Centrism which the same writer a short time back, under the revolutionary influence of conditions in Germany and Russia, most contemptuously attacked. No longer here are the arguments in all this important, or needing to be answered, but the process of mind which makes these arguments possible.

WHAT is the cardinal error that leads to these pitiful results? It is the belief that, in order to reach a mass movement, the revolutionary must approximate himself to the Right Wing, because these are strong. In other words, two completely different processes are confused. The desire to overcome revolutionary isolation, to reach out to the masses, to establish a mass movement on however simple and elementary a basis—this desire is absolutely sound and correct and the most important revolutionary task in England to-day. But the belief that the way to accomplish this lies, not in the discovery of the most direct and

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immediate needs of the masses, and voicing and pressing them against the sophistries of the right-wing leaders, but in approaching closer to the right-wing leaders, in minimising differences and veiling real opinions and using ambiguous language and discovering false points of similarity—that way lies complete confusion and helplessness and practical servitude to the Right Wing. That way leads, not to the masses, but to the reactionary leaders. It is to mistake the Labour Party official machine for the workers. The move to a " Left Wing " becomes in reality a move to the *Right.*

WHAT must be the character of a movement to be of real value to the workers, that is to say, to be, not a capitulation to the Right Wing, but an advance of the working class ? For it is clear that in any discussion of this question the first and foremost thing to recognise is that there can be a *false* Left Wing which leads only to the Right. A few examples will illustrate this. The Vienna International was a species of left-wing movement within the reformist ranks. Nevertheless it was in fact purely and simply a manœuvre on behalf of the Right, for its only purpose was to forestall the revolutionary streaming of the workers away from the discredited Second International and to prevent them passing into the Communist International, and when it had performed its task to shepherd them back into the Second International it went out of existence. The Bloc des Gauches in France to-day is an even cruder example of the use of a Left to canalise off a popular movement away from imperialist politics and skilfully and gently to bring it back to the same channels. The Socialist Peace Negotiations movement, which occupied so much prominence during the last year of the war, was in the same way a nominally left-wing movement, whose practical purpose was to divert the growing popular anti-war feeling away from the revolutionary example of the Russian workers and occupy it instead with fanciful imaginings of a " democratic socialist peace," to which the bourgeois statesmen were to be persuaded, and by the hopes of which the practical support of imperialism was prolonged. All these " Left " movements are examples of movements which in no way made for the liberation of the workers or helped their advance, but actually vitiated and confused their advance by

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raising false issues and frittering away the popular energy on illusions, so that in the end only the practical purposes of the right were served.

NOW to take examples of a different type of movement—movements which have grown out of sharp antagonisms and developed into something real. The Zimmerwaldian Left during the middle years of the war was a movement which combined within itself at first all forms of opposition to war within the socialist world from the purest pacifism to revolutionary Marxism. Nevertheless, it stood for a genuine and actual fight against the warmongers and the patriotic socialists, and therefore it developed and matured and grew until it passed into the experience of the Russian revolution and the organisation of the Communist International. The German Independent Socialists were a Left which at first embraced all elements in opposition to the treachery of the Kaiser Socialists; but because this fight was a genuine fight and not a polite "difference of opinion" (with "no personal attacks") they matured and grew in strength, shedding elements here and adding there, until they passed into the powerful German Communist Party. To take even another example, though of limited scope, from this country. The Independent Labour Party thirty years ago was a Left which was fighting for independent Labour politics apart from the Liberal and Conservative Parties; they attacked the existing Labour leaders, and were attacked by them; but because they were not afraid to fight at that time and had a clear object, they achieved their object by the establishment of the Labour Party—the most important achievement in British working-class politics of the last generation. All these examples are examples of a Left which stood for, not a vague and ambiguous alternative to the Right, but a clear and definite division, and therefore bore fruit.

WHAT, then, do we demand of any "left-wing" movement that it should be of service to the workers? We demand one very simple thing: and that is that a Left Wing should genuinely differentiate itself from the Right. If a Left Wing begins at the outset, not by setting out a clear line

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of distinction from the Right, but by attacking and criticising that section which is in its opinion too distinct from the Right, then there is something wrong with that Left Wing. What is a genuine differentiation from the Right? It is certainly not some such phrase as the following:—

> The attitude of the Left Wing in any movement should be to look ahead at the ultimate objective, to keep clear before the workers the consciousness of the probable necessity to use all methods both political and industrial to attain those ends, to keep in advance of the masses, but never to get ahead so far that it loses contact with them and their everyday practical problems. It is *therefore* no use going about croaking like ravens that the Labour Government has sold the workers to the bourgeoisie, &c.

This Left Wing means precisely nothing. The one and only definite thing in that definition, namely, the statement that the Labour Government has sold the workers to the bourgeoisie, is only mentioned to be disowned. Thus the only precise thing in the statement is the differentiation from the Left, not from the Right. The imagination that a daring mention of a mythical possible *future* use of "all methods both industrial and political" (whatever that may mean) has a halfpennyworth of *present* importance as a differentiation is pitiful—and yet that is all the difference Price sees between the Left and the Right in the British Labour Movement.

A GENUINE differentiation must be established on a fundamental basis, and the only fundamental basis in the working-class movement is the class struggle. A Left Wing in the working-class movement must be based upon the class struggle, or it becomes only a manœuvre to confuse the workers. It must be a union of all who seek to carry forward and advance the class struggle in current issues against those who oppose and deny the class struggle. Only on such a basis can a wider mass movement be developed. But this means first and foremost to be able to see the class issues and the friends and enemies of the class struggle. And this is where Price's greatest failure comes. For he not only fails to see MacDonald as a class factor one way or another, but he actually discusses the whole time the policy of the MacDonald Cabinet, its acts of commission and omission, and the

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rest, *as if it were* a piece of tactics in the class war, with mistakes and successes, boldnesses and weaknesses, &c.—in the face of every public act and declaration of MacDonald that the whole of his policy in every principle and detail is directed primarily and fundamentally in opposition to the whole conception of the class war. The complete sophistication and self-deception of this process is the greatest crime of Price's article.

THAT sophistication is compelled to come out into the open with his reply subsequently published to Campbell's article. In that reply, Price in a single sentence comes out with the classic expressions of just that menshevism, centrism and social treachery which he once attacked. He is arguing (in exactly the same way as all the leaders of the Second International) that the " compromises " of the British Labour Government in its voluntary association and alliance with the British bourgeoisie against the workers and subject races may be compared with the " tactical compromises " of the Russian revolution faced with the armed hostility of all the forces of international capitalism. This is exactly the argument of the British Labour leaders in Russia which Lenin so crushingly analysed in the fourth chapter of his *Infantile Diseases of Left Communism*. And in using it Price shows himself uneasily aware that there is something wrong; that in the one case the compromises are *after* the conquest of power in order to maintain the revolution, while in the other they are *before* the conquest of power in order to maintain the capitalist State and stabilisation to prevent the revolution. And because this awareness cannot escape him, he adds the sentence which betrays his position:—

> " This is " (he says, speaking of the Russian new economic policy) " for the stage after the workers have come into power, but, as Radek and other Communists see, the same principles of tactical compromise may be necessary in the long-drawn-out period which precedes the coming into power of the working classes in Western Europe."

With that sentence peace is made between Price and the reformists.

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THUS the particular move towards a "Left Wing" of which Price has made himself the exponent is not in any sense a move towards a combined effective working-class opposition to the policy for which MacDonald stands. It is in fact exactly the contrary: it is a dispersal and weakening of the Left. It is an individual retreat of one or two ex-revolutionaries who have lost confidence in the revolution to compromise with the Right Wing: it is a separation from the main body of the growing working-class opposition, and it takes in practice the form of attempting to raise rival and confusing issues within the Left, thus leading to a dissipation of forces and a blurring of real issues. A united working-class opposition to the open betrayal and menace of the MacDonald policy must and will arise: but it will arise through clear fighting and clear statement of the issues, and on the basis of the forces that are already prepared to fight, and not on the lines of confused retreat and wavering and self-deception and approximation to the Right, of which Price's article is the expression.

R. P. D.

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THE LABOUR PARTY'S ALTERNATIVE

By P. BRAUN

"*For over one hundred years the Whigs have played the game of gagging their dangerous rivals.*"—*Keir Hardie*, 1903.

"*The Labour Party is becoming a wing of the Liberal Party.*" —*A. W. Humphrey*, 1911.

"*The Prime Minister turns down his Party's most typical appeal.*"—"*Observer*," *Sunday, September* 14, 1924.

THE Twenty-Fourth Annual Conference of the Labour Party will be the first political gathering of the whole Labour Movement since the advent of the Labour Government. As a matter of fact the Fifty-Sixth Trades Union Congress refused to discuss any of the questions that concern the actions and policy of the MacDonald Government. The leaders of that Congress preferred to shun all burning problems, in order to avoid the unpleasant subject of the Labour Government's policy, and unfortunately they succeeded. But whether pleasant or unpleasant, the Labour Party Conference has been left not only to discuss but to decide upon the duties of its Government in office.

A few weeks ago it was still possible to assume that the Conference would centre all its attention upon questions of minor importance, as for instance the medieval ceremonies of the ministers at Court, and so on. After the appearance of the new edition of MacDonald's book, *Socialism, Critical and Constructive*, with a preface dated June, 1924, it has become impossible for the Labour Party to take up such a position in regard to the policy of the Labour Government. The merit of MacDonald's preface is that he states the issue clearly enough, and the Labour Party has been faced with the choice between an independent Socialist policy and a "new gospel" of Labour-Liberalism, as proposed by the Prime Minister, MacDonald.

We are not inclined to over-estimate the significance of declara-

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tions, statements and resolutions. We know how often resolutions are carried with the sole purpose of fooling the people. In political life only actions count. And the actions of the Labour Government are, as a matter of fact, of greater importance than the article by Mr. MacDonald. Still, under the present circumstances the political value of this Preface should not be under-estimated. Until it was published many of the members of the Labour Party tried to persuade themselves, as well as the movement as a whole, that the MacDonald Government had not had a chance to accomplish the pledges given to the constituencies. Now Mr. MacDonald comes out and says that the old pledges have lost their validity, and that the time is ripe to revise the old programmes and the old tactics in accordance with the new ideas born in the offices of Ministers. If this Preface passes unchallenged, then it will mean that the Labour Party, together with MacDonald, repudiates Socialism in order to replace it by a new edition of old, worn-out Liberalism.

The Labour Party's alternative is this: to go with MacDonald against Socialism, or to consolidate the Socialist forces against MacDonaldism.

The Press discusses MacDonald's Preface as something new and unexpected. The fact of the matter is, that MacDonald, who started his political career as a Liberal, has only completed the circle by coming back to his old gospel. Furthermore, a careful study of the past of the Labour Movement, especially of that chapter which records the facts of the formation of the Labour Party, will show us that MacDonald instead of making a new step forward is returning back to the old days when the Labour Movement of this country was still in its cradle.

Post-war conditions have confronted us with many very complicated problems. Many of us have not cared to look back to history, concentrating all our efforts on finding the key to the future. Nevertheless we have got to make a pause and look to the past if we want a better understanding of present conditions, as well as of the means and way to change them.

According to its constitution, the Labour Party is a federation of Trade Unions and of various Socialist organisations. This definition alone is enough to enable us to realise that the Labour

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Party embodies a mosaic of different shades of opinion and political thought. Studying the history of this composite political body, we shall immediately come to the conclusion that it was the co-operation of three elements in the Labour Movement that resulted in the organisation of the Labour Party. These three elements are : (1) The Trade Union Movement pure and simple; (2) the Labour Representation Movement ; and (3) The Socialist Movement.

Let us first glance at the main steps through which the Labour Representation Movement passed. We all know that the defeat of the Chartist Movement resulted in a very long period of political inactivity in the Labour Movement. It was in the years of the formation of the First International that a certain revival on the political field of the Labour Movement was witnessed. Many political labour organisations—local and national—were formed. The most important of those organisations was undoubtedly " The Labour Representation League," which was formed in 1869. The main task of that body was to promote Labour representation in Parliament. The whole history of that League proves that the movement as a whole was to a very great extent under the direct control of the Liberal Party, notwithstanding the fact that some of its leaders, as, for instance, Applegarth and Odger, had been in close connections with the First International guided personally by Karl Marx. The League was in fact a Radical wing of the Liberal Party, and John Stuart Mill was quite correct when he said, commenting upon the results of a by-election in 1870, writing to Mr. Odger: " The result of the by-election in Southwark proves that you have the majority of the Liberal Party with you." Not till 1874 did two working men succeed in getting returned to Parliament—Alexander MacDonald and Burt—both officials of the Miners' Union.

The Labour Movement is at the present moment wondering deeply at the Liberal Imperialist speeches of MacDonald, Thomas, Snowden and others. Let us quote only one sentence from the manifesto of Alexander Thomas after he was returned to Parliament. There we read: " All questions affecting the interests of Capital and Labour would have my constant and undivided attention, believing as I do that it is only by a more peaceful relation of these interests that the greatness and strength

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of our country can be maintained." Let the careful student compare this sentence with all the "new" declarations of our Labour statesmen, and he will come to the conclusion that the Labour Government, instead of moving forward, drags us back to the time when Labour made its first efforts to constitute itself as a new class, with a new historical mission. But in making these comparisons we should not do injustice to the pioneers of the political Labour Movement. They worked under very hard and peculiar conditions. Liberalism was still promising. It was still considered as the movement leading the political fight against the oppressors. The Liberal Party had the reputation of being the party which had broken the back of the landed aristocracy. In such circumstances those who fought for Labour Representation and remained loyal to the Liberals should be considered as pioneers, as men moving forward. It is quite different when MacDonald, Thomas and others repeat the same ideas as their early predecessors, after Liberalism has proved to be one of the wings of the dominant classes. For the sake of justice we should also mention that even in those days there were men in the Labour Movement who understood the real nature of Liberalism. William Harry, for instance, stated that "the Tory acted the part of an open foe, but the Liberal that of a false and perfidious friend, who, while professing sympathy with and proferring service to the cause of working men, sought only to overthrow it." William Harry was quite correct. The false and perfidious friend watched eagerly every step of the Labour Movement, with the sole purpose of hampering its development. Later on, *i.e.*, in 1903, Keir Hardie in his open letter to Lloyd George said: "No one can read the records of the past 130 years without being struck by the skill shown by the Liberals in inveigling the leaders of the people into their net, and always with the same result."

Yes, the Liberals have been very successful. The Tories have exhausted their flexibility by adapting themselves to the general requirements of Capitalism. It was the mission of the Liberals to adapt themselves to the general conditions of the Labour Movement in order to vitiate its progress.

The disappearance of the Labour Representation League was the first success of the Liberals and their policy towards Labour. But skill alone could not bind the life of a new class, which is called upon by history to accomplish a great task. In 1886 new machinery

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was created—the Labour Electoral Committee—which was the beginning of the Labour Electoral Association. The success of this association was at the same time a great success for the Liberal Party. The ten Labour men returned to Parliament were all Liberals and followers of Gladstone, whom they praised as " the man of a hundred fights, the champion of liberty, of the people's cause and the public peace." These Labour M.P.'s, although connected with the Labour masses, were obedient servants of the Liberal Party.

There was an instinctive feeling among the workers that Labour-Liberalism could not represent the cause of the working classes. This feeling was strongly sustained by the Socialist organisations, mainly the Social Democratic Federation, which were already in the field. *Independent* Labour Representation was the natural reaction against the Labour-Liberals who followed the lead of the Liberals. But the Liberals were very watchful. They understood quite well the meaning of *Independent* Labour Representation, and when Keir Hardie stood in 1888 as an Independent Labour candidate he was offered £300 a year and a safe Liberal seat to withdraw. This cynical offer was rejected and it served only to strengthen the movement for Independent Labour Representation. We may even say that this issue was the sharpest at the time when the Independent Labour Party was first organised. The endeavour of the Liberals to sterilise the seeds before they struck roots in the soil met with results the reverse of those intended. In 1899 the Plymouth Trades Union Congress instructed its Parliamentary Committee to convene a special Congress to secure the election of Labour men representatives. This Congress may be considered as the first important victory of the idea of Independent Labour Representation.

But the Liberals were on the watch. Although the conferences called by the Labour Representation Committee repeatedly expressed themselves in favour of an Independent Labour Group in Parliament still the moderate Labour element—the Labour-Liberals—tried their very best to make the new organisation a tool in the hands of the dominant classes. The same Newcastle Conference (1903) which adopted a Labour Party policy rejected all Socialist resolutions as well as the proposition that class war should be the policy of

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the Labour Movement. At the Conference in 1905 an attempt was even made to exclude the I.L.P. and other Socialist bodies from the Labour Representation Conferences. But this resolution was lost, and in 1906 the Labour Party came into being as a federation of Trade Unions, Socialist Parties and other Labour organisations.

The Liberals made a desperate step to hamper the development of this organisation. On March 6, 1906, one of the Liberal agents sent a letter to the Labour-Liberals in which we read: " The opinion has been freely expressed to me by Liberal leaders (who have promised considerable financial support) that a separate organisation should be formed to represent the views of the Liberal-Labour members of Parliament and to secure a substantial increase in their numbers at the next General Election." At the end of the letter was a note: " This letter has not been issued to the twenty-nine Labour M.P.'s pledged to the L.R.C. Programme."

The stratagem of the Liberals was very simple. Their idea was to have a strong Labour-Liberal Group to fight the Independent Labour Group. But the idea of Independent Labour representation had already got well rooted in the soil, and this attempt was a failure.

The dominant classes were compelled to reckon with the fact of the independent existence of the Labour Party. It was the task of the Liberals to find some new cards to play in order to continue the game of gagging their dangerous rivals. In this work the dominant classes of Great Britain were not alone. The political leaders of capitalism all over Europe were confronted with the same problem. They were all looking for ways and means to corrupt the growing independent political movement of the toiling classes in order to make the Socialist Parties into tools of capitalism. Let us bear in mind that it was just the time of the greatest success of imperialist policy. The dominant classes in Europe had taken advantage of the fact that the Socialist Parties everywhere were dominated by skilled workers and paid officials. The problem was how to make these upper sections of the working classes partners in the colonial robberies, and so take the wind out of the Socialist sails. The great conflagration of 1914 proved that this policy of imperialism was successful.

The collapse of the Second International was especially disastrous

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for the Labour Movement in Great Britain, where Liberal traditions were rooted very deeply and Socialist ideas were scattered and mixed with prejudices and conservatism. On August 1, 1914, we read a strong appeal against war signed by Keir Hardie. Several days later a political truce replaced the struggle between the political parties. The political truce was only an introduction to the cessation of industrial hostilities. So, in the moment of the greatest crisis, the " Independent " Labour Movement with all its organisations became a very useful tool in the hands of the capitalist classes. When the war was over the dominant classes succeeded in using the machinery of the Labour Movement as a tool against the revolt of the Labour masses.

The Labour Party became a strong factor in the political life of Great Britain. But the Liberals, following up the development of the Labour Party, could say—and did say—that Liberalism had returned embodied in the policy of the Labour Party. And the Liberals understand that in the long run such a situation cannot last. A Labour Party pursuing a Liberal policy must sooner or later lose its support among the toiling masses. In other words, the Liberals hope that the disruption of the Labour Party will be the inevitable outcome of present conditions. This is the reason why the Liberals gave their consent to the formation of a Labour Government. As long as the Party is in opposition the leaders of the Labour Party have a good chance to hide their Liberal tendencies. The situation changes the very moment when those leaders of the Labour Party are called upon not to speak but to act.

In this light we can easily understand the absence of unity in the Liberal Party towards the Labour Government. Asquith says clearly and plainly: " We still sleep more or less comfortably in our beds. Capital steadily pursues its old routine of continuous and on the whole prosperous investment." And he is prepared to sleep as long as necessary, until the Labour Party discredits itself. Those Liberals who are not so experienced in politics are simply either joining the Labour Party or supporting it very actively. The third group of Liberals is composed of those ambitious politicians who have not patience to wait, and are not satisfied to see Liberalism embodied in the Labour Party but would like to keep the reins of power in their own hands. The inner fight

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between those three groups we can see at every turning point in the history of the Labour Government. The three tendencies of the Liberal Party are especially clear-cut on the question of the Anglo-Russian Soviet Treaty.

The leaders of the Labour Government know perfectly well that at this moment no danger threatens them from the Right. They know that they have not only certain support from Liberalism as an organised political party, but also from those middle elements who followed the lead of the Liberals.

The danger is from the Left, or to be more correct, from the Labour Movement itself, and it is against the Labour Movement that Mr. MacDonald, the head of the Government and the leader of the Party, has drawn his sword.

In the Preface that we have already mentioned Mr. MacDonald comes out as an unrepentant Liberal. But that is not the main point of the Preface. The Preface as a whole should be considered as a deliberately devised attack upon the Labour Movement.

First of all MacDonald makes clear to the workers that the Labour Government is in no way bound by its pledges. He gives a perfectly clear construction about the difference between words and deeds, promises and performance. He says:—

> The pledges he (the Socialist) gives do not concern his achievements of the morrow as much as the purpose which underlies and impregnates all his continuing action. He has ideals and they guide him, and he rejects everything of the nature of violent breaks and brand new systems.

Let us try to understand these sentences. A Socialist Prime Minister may have pacifist ideals. He may even believe in the Programme of the I.L.P. on freedom for subject nations, but he could continue to nourish civil war in China, to bomb the unarmed population of Irak, in order to avoid "violent breaks" in the general Imperialist policy of the dominant classes of Great Britain. He may have in his programme the Capital Levy, but this programme does not concern his "achievements of the morrow." The worker is simply called to believe that whatever the Labour Government does against Socialism and for capitalism is impregnated by an ideal which has nothing to do with the every-day work of the Government.

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Still, this is only a theoretical consideration about pledges and achievements. MacDonald passes from the defence to attack. He states :—

> Profiteering has become universal, and reaction has shown a deplorable tendency to centre in self. The evil has not been confined to the classes generally designated as "profiteers," but has infected all sections. That workmen should not tolerate without a struggle to remedy their conditions, which are not only hard, but unjust, is good, but *in their struggles to secure their ends they are tempted to forget that they are all dependent members of a social unit, and that consequently they only injure themselves by punishing those against whom they have a grievance to such an extent that they injure the society to which they belong.*

I have italicised the last part of this paragraph. Its meaning is clear without comment. Workers who fight capitalists may injure the capitalist society to which they belong. Acting so, they become profiteers, and the Socialist Government is justified in fighting, in using arms against them as against profiteers. This is the new gospel of the Labour Government. We knew the acts behind this new gospel. Now we have a theoretical enlightenment. I am quite sure that there can be no mistake in saying that in this creed MacDonald is not only below the heights of Gladstone's oratory about social welfare, but does not even reach the level of some of the speeches made by Lloyd George. At any rate the dominant classes may feel satisfied. No Prime Minister of any capitalist party would dare to call workers, fighting for the amelioration of their conditions, "profiteers." Such an attack upon Labour could be made only by a man who knows how to use Socialist phrases to cover capitalist actions. MacDonald goes much further. He calls upon the workers to give their very best to serve capitalism. He writes :—

> Socialism calls men to give unstinted service in return for a reasonable reward measured in terms of life, and no one should be more impatient than the Socialist with the fallacy that a man cannot be expected to give the service before he gets the reward.

This appeal to the workers is very easy to understand. The question is only: what has this appeal to do with Socialism? In present circumstances the worker is serving not Socialism but Capitalism. MacDonald as a servant of Capitalism has a perfect right to invite the workers to give unstinted service, and to ask only for a reasonable reward. That is exactly the ideal of the capitalists towards Labour: to get more and to pay less. But if the workers

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follow this friendly appeal by MacDonald we shall only perpetuate capitalist slavery, without a chance even to dream about Socialism.

MacDonald knows that Socialist garments have brought him into office, and for the sake of these garments he uses Socialist phrases in making a clearly and plainly capitalist appeal.

The attack upon the worker includes a certain promise. The promise reads :—

> It is only when the worker by brain or by hand does his best for society that he will create in society that sympathy and support without which the Labour Movement will never attain its goal.

This promise could be translated this way: " If you workers behave well and do your best for capitalist society, you will get the sympathy of that Capitalist society."

So far so good. The only thing which we cannot understand is how " the Labour Government will attain its goal." Are we to understand that if the workers give unstinted service to capitalist society in return for a reasonable reward, society will out of sympathy allow the workers to introduce Socialism ? We hope that even MacDonald would not dare to defend such a statement. The words about the goal of the Labour Movement were only necessary to decorate the open threat made by the Prime Minister to the working class of this country. The threat reads:—

> The Socialist, therefore, looks with some misgivings upon some recent developments in the conflicts between Capital and Labour. They are contrary to his spirit; he believes they are both immoral and uneconomic, and will lead to disaster.

Of course, even a pacifist is justified in using force to prevent disaster and to fight the immoral and uneconomic steps of the workers. We do not know yet exactly which developments in the class struggle the Prime Minister considers as immoral and uneconomic. In the Preface, only four things are mentioned, viz., public doles, Poplarism, strikes for increased wages and limitation of output. If we have correctly understood the meaning of the Preface we shall expect the Labour Government to redraft the Emergency Powers Act, in order to allow the Government to prohibit strikes and to prosecute bodies such as Poplar Council, which dares to try to ameliorate the conditions of Labour against the public opinion of the dominant classes.

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The Preface is a part of a new programme. A careful study of that new programme was made at the I.L.P. Summer School. Socialism, in the new interpretation of MacDonald and of the I.L.P. Summer School, is much nearer to General Dawes than to Marx, about whom MacDonald writes in his book that he " became the personal embodiment of the working-class revolt against capitalism and its fight for Socialism " (see page 47).

And so strikes are immoral and uneconomic. Poplarism is a very bad thing. Violent breaks and brand new systems are dangerous. The workers are profiteers. Under such circumstances the best way to introduce Socialism is to work out a Reparations Scheme by which generations of workers have to give unstinted service in order to foot the bill of the finance magnates. Such a scheme is the best way not only to ridicule but in practice to repudiate Socialism. The " kept " press greeted the scheme of the I.L.P. Summer School and the Preface of the Prime Minister in the same terms.

The *Observer* summed up the Preface of MacDonald by saying that the Prime Minister " turns down his Party's most typical appeal."

Labour's alternative is now either to turn down its leader or to follow him in turning down Socialism.

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THE WORKERS AND THE ANGLO-SOVIET TREATY

By C. M. ROEBUCK

(i) *Two Points of View*

THE crisis that is rapidly approaching over the question of ratifying the Anglo-Soviet Treaty should be a lesson both to the present Government and to British Labour. It is the outcome of a conflict between two entirely opposed and contradictory methods of approach to the problem of improving relations with the Union of Soviet Republics. These two methods, unfortunately, not only both found their advocates within the same Labour Movement and the same Labour Cabinet, but were even confused in practice by many Labour men who might have been expected to distinguish them.

One method is that of the capitalist. The Union of Soviet Republics is the legal successor of the Tsarist Empire: therefore it accepts all the Tsar's obligations, and is bound by the same laws. If the Tsar owed money, the Soviet Government must pay it; if British subjects suffered losses because the Russian workers allowed themselves the luxury of a revolution, the Soviet Government must recoup them; if it nationalised factories belonging to British subjects, the factories must be handed back or paid for. The Soviet Government has no claim against Great Britain for the damages wrought by intervention and bockade, as the British armies were only defending the sacred rights of property; and in any case Britain does not pay indemnities.

The whole of the Capitalist Press, from the *Morning Post* to the *New Statesman*, has at one time or another said all this pretty plainly.

The other method is that of the worker. The Union of Soviet Republics is the first Workers' State, and has destroyed the rule of capitalism over the workers. The only laws which bind it are the laws of loyalty to the working class. It is not in the least liable to pay back the debts contracted by Tsardom in order to

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maintain the unholy Triple Alliance of landowners, bankers and industrialists. The dispossessing of the capitalists without compensation is the economic foundation of the revolution: to repay them means to undermine that foundation. If a handful of British capitalists suffered private losses during the revolution, those losses are as nothing compared with the frightful disasters of famine and disease—to say nothing of loss of life in actual fighting—inflicted wantonly on the many millions of the Russian workers and peasants. If there is any balance due, it is in favour of the Soviet Union, not in favour of the British capitalist class.

Not only have most of these principles been subscribed to, at one time or another, by all spokesmen of organised Labour (from Mr. J. H. Thomas leftwards), but there is practically no class-conscious worker who will not subscribe to them to-day.

It was the first conception which prompted intervention in 1918 and 1919, the attempt to support Poland in August, 1920, the refusal of Government assistance to the famine stricken in 1921, the sabotage of the Genoa and Hague Conferences in 1922, and the Curzon ultimatum in 1923. It was the second conception which created the "Hands Off Russia" mass movement, which brought about the Council of Action, which secured for the Workers' International Russian Relief the support of hundreds of thousands of non-Socialist workers, and which prompted hundreds of Labour organisations in the localities to reply to the Curzon ultimatum by active preparations for a mass upheaval. In each case their own class instinct told the opposing sides clearly and unmistakably what to do.

(ii) *The Policy of Compromise*

But, while this was so in a moment of grave crisis, there were long periods of slow development or negotiation in which the issues did not appear as sharply. And here the powerful hold which the middle-class elements in the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party still maintain over the proletarian rank and file made itself felt. Instead of pressing home and clarifying precisely the *class* significance of the fight for the Soviet Republic, the parliamentary and other champions of an agreement had recourse to other arguments. These arguments aimed at avoiding

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the class roots of the difference between Capitalist Britain and Socialist Russia, at concealing its existence or blurring its outlines, at enlisting the support primarily of the lower middle classes and enlightened bourgeoisie—whom the Labour Party leaders have been, of course, assiduously courting ever since 1918.

Of such a non-committal nature were the arguments about non-intervention in the affairs of any foreign State, about freedom for the Russian people to work out their own salvation, about a great experiment in democracy, about devious paths leading to the same great goal, about the wickedness of restoring the *Romanoff* despotism (instead of the despotism of the *landlords*, *bankers* and *manufacturers*). These arguments were reinforced, thanks to the existence of a number of legal and other flaws in the capitalist case. Thus, in the case of the bondholders, it was recalled that not merely the Soviets, but also the whole of the Liberal and progressive sections of the Duma had in 1905 expressly repudiated beforehand any loans which Tsardom might float in the future. In the case of the property claimants, it was recalled that international law has long released all Governments from the obligation of treating foreigners better than their own subjects: and, as a corollary, that no British subject doing business abroad can complain of nationalisation without compensation if the same principle is applied to all the citizens of the country where he is living. Cases in which other States have not paid their debts, or have expropriated foreigners without compensation, were cited. And so on.

All these were excellent subsidiary arguments, which would have helped to salve the formula-loving conscience of the middle classes, had they been incessantly accompanied by direct class appeals to the workers which would have made the pressure continuous. Here, however, the leaders of the Labour Movement took the wrong turning. Instead of making the middle-class arguments subsidiary, they almost entirely *substituted* them for the arguments and the demands dictated by purely working-class interests. Anyone who looks over the pages of the *Herald* or the *New Leader*, or refers to Labour speeches on Russia in "Hansard," will find ample evidence to prove this up to the hilt. The Communist Party was left alone in advocating a purely working-class policy towards Russia.

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(iii) *Compromise at Work*

What were the consequences of the official policy, dictated in some cases by an opportunist middle-class outlook and in others resulting from a state of utter political confusion ?

In the first place, the arguments about self-determination, liberty, democracy, &c., proved double-edged. It was (and, unfortunately, still is) sufficient for a handful of Georgian adventurers, masquerading as Socialists and democrats, to organise (on French gold) a gang of brigands in the mountains and let them loose on the small hamlets and towns of the Georgian countryside, and at the same time to utilise to the full the capitalist control of the world's Press agencies, for the whole world to be given to understand that the indignant Georgian masses have risen against their Bolshevik oppressors, &c. And many class-conscious workers, whose *instinct* told them that the whole story was a lie, that the Georgian workers and peasants were for the first time using their own freely elected Soviets to build the new order, were betrayed into the foolish belief that a Workers' and Peasants' Government was acting in flagrant defiance of its whole previous policy and reason for existence. Or men who, in more reasonable moments, realised the deadly part the priesthood had played in Russia, and the constant espionage and counter-revolution that pours in even yet, day and night, over the Soviet border (and *must* continue to pour in so long as Capitalism and Socialism continue to exist side by side), were swept away, at the time of the Butkevich trial, by the same emotionalism which they had called into play on behalf of Soviet Russia, and led into actions, manifestoes, telegrams, &c., which played straight into the hands of the counter-revolution.

Secondly, the capitalists of Britain and France were enabled again and again to gather their strength for a new attack, instead of experiencing a decisive defeat once for all. Defeated and cowed by the naked fist of the proletariat in the autumn of 1919, they plucked up courage again a year later. Thwarted once more, they tried their chances again in the spring of 1923, and, again defeated, tried yet again in the autumn of the same year (the refusal to admit Rakovsky). And, though they were beaten down at each of these critical moments, it was at the price of infinite energy—and

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of long periods of sabotage between whiles. Let us not forget the weary months of subterfuge and delay in withdrawing the British troops from Russia (1919-20), the long haggling and threatening over the Trade Agreement (1920-21), the acts of sabotage, great and small, in 1921-22 (the encouragement of the Border States, the famine, Genoa and the Hague), the refusal to extend the Trade Facilities Act and Export Credits Scheme to Russia.

Finally, when at last a Labour Government was formed in this country, out of the very elements who were most diffuse, vague and "above-all-classes" in their advocacy of friendship with Soviet Russia, the middle-class influence became so strong that it led the Labour Government away from the path of Labour altogether. First, a long delay in actual recognition. No one should be surprised that ten days is called a long delay; such was the furious campaign of the capitalist Press that every day of silence, every day on which some courteous gesture of recognition did not take place, could only mean one thing—fear, which required to be prodded by vigorous protests from the active Labour workers before it yielded to duty. Then the omission to pay any tribute or any simple courtesy to the memory of Lenin, apart from formal condolences delivered through the British Mission in Moscow, which could not be avoided and which remained unknown or unreal to the working masses in Britain. Then the refusal to extend any of the existing credit schemes to Russia—a demand which had throughout been treated as something quite independent of *de jure* recognition. Then the long-drawn-out second thoughts on the appointment of a Labour Ambassador to Moscow—a suggestion which the working-class movement had hailed with enthusiasm, but which was stormed at or jeered at by the capitalists. And, lastly, the support of the bondholders, property owners and other claimants throughout the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, with the natural sequel of a rupture on the question of recognising liability in principle to compensate the former owners of nationalised property.

(iv) *The Treaty*

Let it be remembered that this was not the result of a tactless or unaccommodating attitude on the part of the Soviet Delegation.

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In the first place, a number of outstanding questions were cleared up by the clauses (2-4) dealing with former Russo-British treaties. Elaborate provisions were made on the vexed question of fishing in Soviet waters, involving the concession of the three-mile limit and of a considerable new fishing area in British interests (5). On the old question of propaganda, the Soviet Delegation accepted a formula far more extensive and provocative even than that drawn up by Curzon in 1923 (16).

And secondly, in spite of all the misrepresentation of the Capitalist Press, the Soviet Delegation made big concessions to the bondholders and other claimants. Before the Treaty, the bondholders had neither the money nor the promise of any. To-day, they have the promise of satisfaction on all foreign bonds other than those acquired for speculative purposes. The same is the position of the claimants for goods supplied, or services rendered, or small private losses. Before the Treaty, claimants for nationalised property had neither the property nor any hope of compensation. To-day, they have the prospect of compensation on their claims, the justice of which will be examined by a mixed commission.

True, the Soviet Delegation made certain reservations. It recognised that it must pay for the opportunity to develop its commercial relations with Britain—the half-hearted and compromising attitude of the spokesmen of British Labour, already referred to, made that inevitable. But the Soviet Delegation had no power to renounce the vital conquests of the revolution, and it could not place on the exhausted shoulders of the Russian workers and peasants greater burdens than they could bear. Consequently, all the payments promised were expressly stated to be *in exception to* the Soviet laws concerning annulment of the Tsarist foreign debts, nationalisation of large-scale industry and cancellation of concessions. Secondly, the payments themselves were made conditional upon a loan—not, as the Capitalist Press, with characteristic effrontery, has put it, to pay back one set of British capitalists with the money procured from another set, but in order to revive industry and agriculture, which were ruined by British gold, and thus make any payment at all a practical possibility.

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These reservations were made in order to make the Treaty a compromise and not a surrender. For a surrender would not merely have been a humiliation to the U.S.S.R., it would simply have been intolerable for the workers and peasants. The Treaty would have been rejected by them, and the claimants would have been as far off any prospect of hard cash as the Soviet Government from any prospect of large credits.

(v) *The Rupture and Its Sequel*

But the middle-class policy had to show itself in its true colours. The Labour Cabinet, which had abandoned the working-class standpoint at the very outset, by adopting an "above-all-classes," purely "national" point of view, and openly proclaiming that its main object was to secure "justice for British traders," during the negotiations acted more and more openly as the representative of organised capital, not of organised Labour. And it completed its evolution by forcing a rupture on the very point of principle which the Soviet Delegation could not accept—liability to compensate former owners of property as a matter of right. It cannot be too often emphasised that this was the inevitable end of the road on to which the Labour Government had stepped, and the Labour Party leaders before it, by their non-committal, equivocal, general phrases about "a just settlement," "the interests of both Russia and Britain" and so on. All that was required was, first, the relaxation of the direct brutal pressure of the masses, and, second, the presence of a number of skilful lawyers and adroit officials to meet the purely technical arguments already referred to, and to put the necessary capitalist *content* into the general *formulæ* about "justice," "fair play," "non-intervention in internal affairs." While the bankers and the Capitalist Press called a spade a spade, and said what they wanted, the Labour Government was allowed to salve its conscience by using non-committal phrases.

Fortunately, the working-class instinct was not dead. That section of the Labour leaders, both in Parliament and in the trade unions, which had the closest connection with the masses, realised what was happening. Their energetic fists banged down on to the table just as when Curzon was acting for the bondholders and creditors saved the situation. Whatever apologies and explanations

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the Labour Government offers in order to avoid acknowledgment of its class connections, whatever general phrases it uses about "intervention," "mediation" and "a new formula," the working class knows perfectly well that the question was not of a *new* formula, but of substituting a formula that protected the interests of the workers for a formula that asserted the rights of the capitalists. When the crisis came, it was a case of the workers' viewpoint against the capitalist viewpoint, just as it was when Lloyd George and Baldwin were Prime Ministers.

(vi) *The Next Step*

The Treaty has been signed. Parliament has to decide on ratification three weeks after it meets. The Capitalist Press has opened a desperate campaign against the Treaty, sticking at no legal quibbles, no distortion, no lies. The Trades Union Congress and Labour Party leaders have begun a national campaign in support of the Treaty. The fate of the Government depends upon the issue.

What is to be done? First and foremost, to explain to the workers the real meaning of the Treaty, and of the whole struggle for peace and friendship with the Union of Soviet Republics. Whatever may have been the motives of MacDonald and his Cabinet in drawing up the Treaty, whatever may have been in their minds when they signed it, the workers must know that it is they themselves who saved it—*the working class*, and not the "nation," or the "community," or even the "people." They must know that they saved it, not from "malignant hostility," or "unreasoning hatred," or "blind prejudice," but from the cool, calculating, tenacious *capitalist class*—that same capitalist class which exploits them and which they have to fight at every turn in their daily life. They must be shown how, ever since the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917, this fight has been going on between the British workers and the British capitalists, first to prevent the crushing of the Soviet Republic, and now to consolidate its position.

Secondly, they must be told frankly that there is no half-way house between the capitalist and the working-class view, even if objective conditions are such that in practice a compromise has

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to be effected. They must be shown how, every time working-class pressure has been remitted or relaxed, capitalist pressure has been renewed and plots against Soviet Russia have reappeared. They must understand that, just as when they are supporting their comrades by a strike of solidarity, there can be no thought of the interests of the capitalists, and every such thought is a weakening of the workers and an encouragement to the workers' enemies. They must realise that the Soviet Republic has fought and they have defended it, that they have forced first its recognition and then the Treaty, because of the interests, not of the British "nation," but of the British working class, which are identical with the interests of the Russian working class. Those leaders who are now mobilising the British proletariat in what is essentially a class fight must have no hesitation in telling the masses that their friends and allies are the Russian workers and peasants, while for foreigner and enemy is the British capitalist.

Finally, the Treaty must be ratified. That the masses must demand without equivocation, and MacDonald must ask for their support in a new election if the capitalist M.P.'s refuse. (In parenthesis, we may see how the very threat of mass action has begun to sober a large group of capitalist M.P.'s.) But it must not be forgotten that the Treaty itself is a compromise, forced on the Soviet Republic by the weakness and ambiguity of the position taken up by the leaders of the Labour Party. The Treaty provides for cash payments from the ruined workers and peasants of Russia to the wealthy bankers and property owners of Britain. Still more, the loan which will render swifter and easier economic reconstruction possible (in Britain as well as in Russia) will be, and is already, the subject of a virulent and desperate capitalist attack, quite apart from the present Treaty. That attack can only be broken by a counter-offensive; and the counter-offensive should begin now.

The Communist Party has already put forward a programme for the counter-offensive. Those workers who disagree with the Communists on other matters need not fear, the programme does not commit them to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or to civil war, or even to the principles of the Communist International. The points of the programme are simply practical demands which

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follow from the hard logic of practical experience, demands which aim at placing the working-class victory on this particular field beyond the possibility of a peradventure for some time to come, and simultaneously *keeping the capitalists on the run*. The programme is one which every class-conscious worker, big or little, must admit is only adequate to meet the present conditions. Its points are (1) not a penny of compensation for bondholders, property-owners or any other claimants who worked or fought against the Soviet Government; (2) £100 million loan (the amount spent on Kolchak and Denikin) to the Union of Soviet Republics; (3) dispatch of a British Ambassador, nominated by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, to Moscow; (4) repudiation of the British approval given to the Roumanian seizure of Bessarabia; (5) joint action with the Soviet Government to summon a World Disarmament Conference, to which the workers' organisations in each country shall send a number of delegates equal to those of their respective Governments.

By the time these lines appear, the Labour Party Conference will be assembling. The reopening of Parliament will be near. There will still be time for a clear and uncompromising declaration, on behalf of the organised workers of Great Britain, that will advance the cause of international peace between the toilers and strike a blow at the common enemy—capitalism.

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ENGLISH PACIFISM AND ENGLISH AVERSION TO THEORY[1]

By V. I. LENIN

IN England there has existed up till now an incomparably larger measure of political freedom than in any other European country. Here the bourgeoisie has been more used to governing than is the case in other countries, and understands the art of governing better. The relations between the classes are more developed and in many respects clearer than in other countries. Freedom from compulsory military service affords the people greater liberty in respect to their attitude to war in so far as everybody is free to refuse to enter the army. The Government is therefore compelled (in England the Government constitutes in its purest form a committee for conducting the business of the bourgeoisie) to exert all its forces in order to arouse "popular" enthusiasm for the war. It would be quite impossible to achieve this aim, without committing a fundamental breach of law, were the proletarian mass not completely disorganised and demoralised by the minority of best paid and qualified workers organised in the unions going over to Liberal, that is, to bourgeois politics. The English trade unions comprise one-fifth of the wage workers. The leaders of these trade unions are Liberals for the greater part, and Marx long ago designated them as agents of the bourgeoisie.

All these peculiarities of England enable us on the one hand to understand the nature of present-day social chauvinism the more easily, as it is precisely the same in the countries with a despotic form of government as well as in the democratic countries, in the militarist countries as well as in those without compulsory military service. On the other hand, they help us, when regard is had to all the facts, to estimate the importance of those reconcilia-

[1] This article by Lenin has only lately come to light. The manuscript was undated, but it is conjectured that the article must have been written about the beginning of 1915.—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

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tory tendencies with social chauvinism which find expression, for example, in the glorification of the slogan of peace, &c.

The most complete expression of opportunism and of Liberal-Labour politics is undoubtedly to be seen in the Fabian Society. In this connection the reader should carefully peruse the exchange of letters between Marx and Engels and Sorge. He will there find a brilliant characterisation of this society by Engels, who treats Messrs. Sidney Webb & Co. as a gang of bourgeois scoundrels, who wish to poison the workers and to influence them in a counter-revolutionary direction. We can be quite sure that not a single one of the influential and responsible leaders of the Second International has at any time attempted to refute this judgment of Engels, and that none of them have attempted to cast any doubts upon the correctness of this judgment.

Let us lay aside theory for a moment and compare the facts. We shall see that the attitude of the Fabians during the war (see for example their weekly paper, the *New Statesman*) and that of the German Social Democratic Party, including Kautsky, is *exactly the same*. The same direct as well as indirect defence of social chauvinism, the same uniting of this defence with the inclination to utter all sorts of kind, humane and almost Left phrases regarding peace, disarmament, &c., &c.

The fact exists, and there follows from it, no matter how disagreeable it may be for various persons, the inevitable and indisputable consequence: that the leaders of the present-day German Social Democratic Party, including Kautsky, are in practice just as much agents of the bourgeoisie as the Fabians, whom Engels long ago characterised as such. The repudiation of Marxism by the Fabians and its "recognition" by Kautsky & Co. make not the slightest difference to the matter when it comes to actual policy, but only proves the transformation of Marxism into Struvism by certain writers, politicians, &c. . . . Their hypocrisy is not their personal sin; they can, under certain circumstances, be the best fathers of families. Their hypocrisy is the result of an objective contradiction in their social position. Ostensibly they represent the revolutionary proletariat, and in reality are agents for the promotion of bourgeois chauvinist ideas in the ranks of the proletariat.

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The Fabians are more honest and sincere than Kautsky & Co. as they have not promised to go in for the revolution—but politically they are of the same kidney.

The " deep-rootedness " of political freedom in England and the high stage of development of English political life in general and of the English bourgeoisie in particular have resulted in the various shades of bourgeois opinions in this country finding quickly, easily and freely a new form of expression in new political organisations. One of these organisations is the Union of Democratic Control. The secretary and treasurer of this organisation is E. D. Morel, who is at present a constant contributor to the central organ of the Independent Labour Party, the *Labour Leader*. Morel was some years ago the candidate of the Liberal Party in the constituency of Birkenhead. When Morel, soon after the outbreak of the war, spoke *against* Russia, he was informed by a letter from the Birkenhead Liberal Association, dated October 2, that in future his candidature would not be acceptable for the Liberal Party, that means he was simply expelled from the party. Morel replied in a letter dated October 14,which he then published in a special pamphlet under the title, *The Outbreak of War*. In this pamphlet, as well as in a number of other articles, Morel exposes his Government by proving how incorrect it was to point to the violation of Belgian neutrality as being the cause of the war, and to claim that the object of the war was the destruction of Prussian imperialism, &c., &c. . . . Morel defends the programme of the Union of Democratic Control: Peace, disarmament, the right of self-determination of all territories on the basis of a plebiscite and democratic control of foreign policy.

From all this it is to be seen that Morel, as a person, undoubtedly deserves recognition for his sincere sympathy for democracy, for his turning from the chauvinist bourgeoisie to the pacifist bourgeoisie. When Morel proved by facts that his Government deceived the people when they denied the existence of secret treaties, although they existed all the time; that the English bourgeoisie, even in the year 1887, was perfectly clear as to the inevitability of the violation of Belgian neutrality in the event of a Franco-German war and emphatically rejected every idea of intervention (Germany at that time was not yet a dangerous

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competitor); that the French militarists of the type of Colonel Boucher have before the war, in a number of books, openly announced their intention of conducting an *aggressive* war on the part of France and Russia against Germany; that the well-known English military authority, Colonel Repington, in the year 1911 characterised in the Press the increase of armaments in Russia since 1905 as a danger for Germany—when Morel proves all this we must admit that we are dealing with a courageous bourgeois who is not afraid of breaking with his own party.

Everybody must, however, immediately perceive that he is nevertheless a bourgeois, whose phrases regarding peace and disarmament remain empty phrases, as without the revolutionary action of the proletariat there can be no talk either of a democratic peace or of disarmament. And Morel, who has now fallen out with the Liberals on account of the question of the present war, remains on all economic and political questions a Liberal. Why is it regarded, not as a piece of hypocrisy, but as a merit when Kautsky in Germany uses the same bourgeois phrases concerning peace and disarmament, decorated with Marxist terminology? Only the backward development of political conditions and the lack of political freedom in Germany prevents a bourgeois league of peace and disarmament springing up, on the basis of the programme of Kautsky, with the same ease and rapidity as in England.

Let us recognise the fact that Kautsky adopts the standpoint of the pacifist bourgeois and not of the revolutionary social democracy. We are living in the midst of sufficiently great events to have the courage to recognise the truth "regardless of persons."

In their aversion to abstract theory, proud of their practicality, the English often approach political questions in a direct manner. They thereby help the Socialists of other countries to find the real content within the husk of every kind of terminology —including the Marxist. In this connection the pamphlet, *Socialism and War*,[2] which was published before the war by the chauvinist paper, the *Clarion*, is instructive. The pamphlet contains a "declaration" by Upton Sinclair, the American

[2] *Socialism and War*. The Clarion Press, 44 Worship Street, London, E.C.

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Socialist, against war, and the reply of the chauvinistic Robert Blatchford, who has for long occupied the same imperialist position as Hyndman.

Sinclair is a sentimental Socialist without theoretical training. He puts the question " simply," he is incensed at the approach of war, and seeks salvation from war through Socialism.

" We are told," writes Sinclair, " that the Socialist movement is still too weak, that we must rely upon evolution. But evolution proceeds in the hearts of men; we are the instruments of evolution, and if we do not fight, then there will be no evolution. We are told that our movement against the war will be suppressed. But I declare, and I am profoundly convinced of it, that the suppression of all activity which has as its aim, on the ground of the highest humanity, the prevention of war, would constitute the greatest victory of Socialism, the greatest it has ever gained, as this would rouse the conscience of civilisation and stir up the workers of the whole world as never before in history. Let us not be too anxious regarding our movement; let us not attach too much importance to numbers and the appearance of outward strength. A few thousand with enthusiastic faith and determination are stronger than a million of more cautious and respectable people. And there is no greater danger for the Socialist movement than the danger of becoming an accepted institution."[3]

As we see, this is a naive, not well thought out theoretically, but a thoroughly right exhortation against allowing Socialism to become rotten and a summons to revolutionary struggle.

What is Blatchford's reply to this ?

" That war is caused by capitalist and militarist interests: all this is quite true. And I am striving, not less than any other Socialist, for peace and the overcoming of capitalism by Socialism. But Sinclair will not convince me by means of rhetorical and beautiful phrases, he will not be able to get away from the facts. Facts, my dear Sinclair, are obstinate things, and the German danger is a fact. Neither we nor the German Socialists are in a position to prevent war. Sinclair tremendously overestimates our forces. We are not united, we have neither money nor weapons nor discipline. There only remains one thing for us: to help the

[3] Retranslated from the Russian.

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English Government to increase its fleet, as there is and can be no other guarantee for peace."

On the continent of Europe the chauvinists, neither before nor after the outbreak of the war, have ever proclaimed themselves so openly. In Germany there prevails in the place of such sincerity the hypocrisy of Kautsky and the playing with sophisms; the same is the case with Plechanoff. It is especially instructive, therefore, to observe the conditions in a more developed country. Here it is impossible to mislead anybody by sophistry and by a travesty of Marxism. Here the questions are stated directly and correctly. Let us learn from the " advanced " English.

Sinclair, in his appeal, although this appeal is at bottom thoroughly correct, is naive, as he has neglected to observe the fifty years' development of the Socialist mass movement and the struggle of tendencies within this mass movement; he fails to observe the conditions of growth of revolutionary action along with the existence of an objective revolutionary situation and a revolutionary organisation. One cannot make up for this lack by " sentiment." One cannot by means of rhetoric evade the hard and ruthless fight of powerful tendencies in Socialism—the opportunist and the revolutionary tendency.

Blatchford baldly proclaims the truth, and puts forward the concealed argument of the Kautskyites who fear to speak the truth. We are still weak, and that is all, says Blatchford. But through his sincerity he immediately reveals and lays bare his opportunism, his chauvinism. That he serves the bourgeoisie and the opportunists is to be seen at once. After having admitted the "*weakness*" of Socialism, he *weakens it himself* by advocating an anti-Socialist bourgeois policy. Like Sinclair, but on the other side, not as a fighter but as a coward, not as a hot-head but as a traitor, he also fails to take into account the conditions for the creation of a revolutionary situation.

But in his practical conclusions and in his policy (renunciation of revolutionary action and of the propagation and preparation of this action), Blatchford, the vulgar chauvinist, follows precisely the same path as Plechanoff and Kautsky.

Marxist phrases have nowadays become a cloak for the complete denial of Marxism. In order to be Marxist one must expose the

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" sham Marxist saintliness " of the leaders of the Second International, one must fearlessly keep in view the struggle of two tendencies in Socialism and think out the questions of this struggle to their logical conclusion. This is the inference to be drawn from the English conditions which reveal to us the *Marxist* essence of the matter *without Marxist* phrases.

THE WRITINGS OF LENIN

An extremely important announcement regarding forthcoming publication of a series of articles in THE LABOUR MONTHLY *is made elsewhere in this issue ; see inside page of back cover.*

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THE WORLD SITUATION AND THE DAWES PLAN

By EDO FIMMEN

WITH the London Conference the representatives of the international bourgeoisie were seeking a definite and final solution of the reparations problem on the basis of the Dawes Report.

This Report of the Experts has been hailed with satisfaction in certain working-class circles, and attempts are being made to find in the discussions in London a source of hope and confidence. Such is the satisfaction expressed, the confidence in the future, and so joyful are the voices raised, that one might be excused for regarding this report as one of the marvels of the twentieth century.

I therefore feel that it is necessary to give some explanation of the real significance to the working class of this Experts' Report. It would be a serious mistake to give the sanction of approval, or even to pass in silence, the Pact of London, whose importance is certainly not less than that of the Treaty of Versailles.

Now, what is, briefly, the tenor of the Dawes Report, and what will be the consequences of its acceptance for the German and international workers ?

Let us first of all examine the burdens the adoption of the report places on Germany's shoulders.

For the first year the amount is to be one milliard of gold marks; this is raised to one and one-fifth milliards in the second and third years; again to one and three-quarter milliards in the fourth; and finally from the fifth year, which is regarded as the first " normal " year, the amount is to be two and a half milliards a year.

These amounts do not include the proceeds of the sale of the bonds which are to be issued and handed over to the Reparations Commission or its agents. These bonds are :—

Eleven milliards of gold marks in first mortgage railway bonds;

Five milliards of gold marks in industrial debentures.

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The sources of the payments to be made are to be the Budget, the German State Railways and industry in general.

On the Budget the taxation revenue is to be levied to the extent of 110 millions of gold marks, up to the financial year 1926-27; 500 millions the fourth year, and from the fifth year onwards 1,250 millions of gold marks.

During the first two years foreign loans are to be allocated to the payment of reparations.

The German State Railways constitute the second category of these sources of reparations. As I have already said, the Reparations Commission will issue 11 milliards of first mortgage bonds, bearing interest at 5 per cent., plus 1 per cent. for sinking fund. The full amount of interest and amortisation will only be payable from the financial year 1927-28 onwards, and will amount to 660 millions of gold marks. During the year 1924 it will be 330 millions; during 1925, 465 millions, and during 1926, 550 millions.

To these amounts that are to come out of the railways must be added, starting with the financial year 1926-27, 290 millions of gold marks to come out of a Transport Tax.

The burdens on industry in general are relatively much smaller. The industrial debentures to be issued and handed over to the Reparations Commission or its agents amount to 5 milliards of gold marks, bearing the same interests of 5 per cent. and 1 per cent. to a sinking fund. The full burden of interest and amortisation, amounting to 300 million marks, starts from the financial year 1927-28. For the first year (1924-25) nothing is payable, for the second year the amount is to be 125 millions of gold marks and for the third year 250 millions.

Formidable as these burdens appear to be, even at first sight, the really damnable part of the Report is less easy to understand. Far worse than the annual payments to be made are the conditions attached thereto on the pretext of guaranteeing the execution of the scheme.

To start with there is a clause which at first glance would actually seem to lighten the burden to be imposed on Germany. I mean the clause which makes the payments variable and adapted to the

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degree of economic development of Germany. The cloven hoof hidden under this apparently harmless clause has already been laid bare by Poincaré. In a speech in the Senate on July 10, he described this clause as an integral part of the Report. He declared that on the most conservative estimate the payments of Germany, under the clause in question, would amount to three milliards in 1936, three and a-half milliards ten years later, and after a further ten years, four and a-half milliards. And as Poincaré himself emphasised, these figures are probably very much below the reality.

Let us take a glance at the other principal features of the Experts' Report.

It is proposed to set up a Bank of Issue under the control of the Reparations Commission ; to transfer all the State Railways to a joint stock company, and to place them under the control of a commissioner to be appointed by the Reparations Commission ; and finally to place a lien on the proceeds from certain loans.

This will mean that Germany and all German Governments, so long as the provisions of the Dawes Report hold sway, will be deprived of its sovereign rights in the two spheres where they are perhaps of the greatest importance—finance and transport.

These provisions are not by any means accidental. They are not to be regarded as an incidental feature of the " recovery of a debt," as alleged by the Experts. Together with the clause providing for variable payments, which I have already mentioned, they constitute the very kernel of the Report, and apparently also an expression of the real intentions of the bankers and industrialists who have been appointed as experts by the Reparations Commission. Germany must on no account be allowed to get on her feet again. Every obstacle must be placed in the way of her reconstruction, which is only to be permitted in so far as it serves the interests of her creditors, and the limit of which it is not hard to guess—the point where Germany threatens to be a competitor in the world market.

Nobody who reads the Experts' Report without any preconceived ideas can avoid the impression that its essential clauses are inspired by the fear of German competition. There can be no other explanation of conditions which will reduce Germany to a state of absolute dependence for many decades; and there can be no other explanation of the fact that the Report omits to fix a date

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when the annual payments are to cease. If due account is taken of these impositions and omissions it is not so difficult to find an explanation of M. Poincaré's enthusiasm for the Report ; because in view of the possible—though until actually achieved uncertain—evacuation of the Ruhr, it provides the means, in certain circumstances, for the even more complete strangulation of Germany. The financial burdens are mere secondary considerations compared with these stipulations. After all what does an annual sum of two and a-half milliards of marks mean to the Allies, when it is considered that according to the calculations of the Italian statistician Bongart the war has cost Great Britain 44,029 millions of dollars (170 milliards of marks); and France 25,813 millions of dollars (105 milliards of marks)? Even if the whole of the reparations payments went to France they would not suffice to pay one-half of the interest on her war costs. At the outside the two and a-half milliard marks would only cover the interest on the nine and a-half milliard dollars, or forty milliards of marks, which represent the Government loans placed in the United States by Great Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. This amount does not include the other Government debts contracted abroad by the creditor nations. There are also loans made by Great Britain to France, Italy and Belgium amounting to 1,137.2 millions of pounds sterling, or 25 milliards of marks.

Even for Germany these charges are quite bearable, as the old Government bonds as well as fixed interest bearing industrial obligations have been practically wiped out by the depreciation of the currency.

As a matter of fact the extinction of Germany's old internal debt is the starting point for the provisions of the Report. The creditor nations are afraid that Germany may gain enormous advantages, from this financial unburdening, in the competition with countries which have hesitated to go in for inflation, or have not dared to do it to the same extent, or who have heavy obligations abroad as a result of the high rates of exchange. The efforts of the Experts are almost exclusively directed to deprive Germany of the advantages of the situation she has created. That is the reason for making her burden a variable one, for the control of German finances and transport and, last but not least, the silence as to the term within which the payments must be completed.

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Nevertheless, it should not be concluded that the Experts want to make things particularly hard for the German bourgeoisie. It is clear that they quite realise that the depreciation of the currency has had quite varying effects on the different layers of the German population. In this respect the Report makes some very just remarks; but the recommendations and practical proposals of the Report, as far as fiscal questions are concerned, are in flagrant contradiction with these remarks. The only fiscal recommendation which can really touch the possessing class is that relating to the death duties, and it may be mentioned that the Report states that "there is considerable room for increased taxation under this head." Apart from the imposition of a mortgage debt on German industries, there is no proposal in the Report seriously affecting German capital. There is, therefore, not only a danger, but actually a practical certainty that the greater part of the proposed burdens will fall on those layers of the German population at whose expense the State has extinguished its debts and the wealthy have become wealthier. The principles of social justice which one finds scattered here and there make no essential difference. They are only put there to hoodwink public opinion in general and the working class in particular. The real tendency of the Report is directly opposed to these principles. The conclusions scrupulously and cleverly avoid any attempt to involve capital, directly proving once more that dog does not eat dog.

The recommendations as to taxation take no account of the reduced capacity for taxation of the working and middle classes which has been a consequence of the currency depreciation; and neither do they allow for the increase of this capacity for taxation among the possessing classes.

But these are not the only facts which justify our point of view. It finds even more justification in the premises upon which, for example, the estimate of the profit-making capacity of the railways is based. I am thinking particularly of the opinion of the two railway experts about railwaymen's wages. They look upon the proposed raising of railwaymen's wages to an average of 93 per cent. of the pre-war rates as "eminently reasonable," and also regard it as final.

If we consider that the cost of living is from 60 per cent. to

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70 per cent. higher than it was before the war, it can only mean that the experts regard as normal a *real wage* which is only a fraction over half what real wages were before the war. And as experience has abundantly proved that the fact that railwaymen live scattered more or less over the whole area of a country has a very powerful influence over the general level of wages, the implication is that real wages of 60 per cent. to 70 per cent. of those usual before the war are regarded as the normal and proper wages for Germany.

Of late years manufacturers in all countries have pointed out and complained on many occasions of the dumping of German goods, manufactured on the basis of starvation wages. The Experts had an opportunity to sow the seeds of a new policy in this respect, but instead of doing so they have based their reparations proposals on wages very much lower than a reasonable standard of living requires.

Not only the German proletariat, but the whole international working class, has good reason to regard this part of the Experts' Report with considerable uneasiness ; for it concerns not only the German railwaymen, and after them the German working class in general; but it is also a serious threat for the workers in other countries. The existence and maintenance of so unfavourable a wage level in a country of the importance of Germany cannot but have an unfavourable influence on the wage level in other countries. But a still more serious result will be its weakening of the fighting spirit of the German working class in their struggle to reconquer and preserve the eight-hour day. The prevailing distress has forced many groups of workers to give up the eight-hour day, and this makes it very much more difficult to maintain it in other countries.

And this danger of the permanent oppression of the German working class to workers in other countries is not by any means counterbalanced by the possible increased revenues of the victor States. Whatever may be got out of Germany will not lighten financial burdens and taxation, especially as the possibility of transferring such large sums to other countries seems to be a little uncertain—even to the Experts. The Report does not contain a solution of this question of transfer. As a provisional measure it is suggested that the amount be transferred to the Bank of Emission which is to be established, to be credited to the account of the agent of the Reparations Commission, who, together with five Currency

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and Financial experts from the Allied and Associated Powers, will decide how the money is to be disposed of.

It is quite clear that there are only two possible ways in which the money can be used so as to benefit the creditors :—

(1) The purchase of Germany's exportable surplus of manufactures ;

(2) The purchase of German property in Germany itself.

The second of these could be effected by the agent of the Reparations Commission buying with the money at his disposal German industrial shares, to be sold later abroad. In the long run this would result in a preponderant foreign influence in German industry, and it is clear that to avoid this danger every effort will be made by Germany to make it possible for the creditor nations to dispose of the reparations payments abroad—in other words she will increase her exports as much as possible, and limit her imports to what is strictly necessary. This would mean more intensive German competition in the world market, while the importance of Germany as a market for foreign products would decline considerably. These two factors would result in an increase of unemployment abroad.

From whatever point of view one considers the Experts' Report, and whatever the political consequences of its adoption and carrying into practice may be, there is no doubt that economically speaking it will lead to the strengthening of the international foundations of the capitalist system, to the injury of the German and international working classes. It shows lack of judgment and even blindness to greet the Experts' Report and its reparations proposals with joy and satisfaction. On the contrary, the working class should do all it can to prevent the carrying into effect of a report which means a further step to slavery. If it cannot be prevented it means the opening up of a new era for international capitalism—the colonisation of Europe and the international exploitation of the workers of all lands, who will provide the coolie labour for this colony.

It is my firm conviction that it is our duty to declare unequivocally and unreservedly against the acceptance of the Experts' Report, and against the solution of the reparations question on the basis of that report. We should take up this attitude firstly in the spirit of international solidarity towards the German workers, who,

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as I think I have demonstrated sufficiently clearly, will otherwise be delivered, bound hand and foot, to the exploitation of international capitalism; and secondly in our own interest—for our own sakes and for that of the workers in all lands, upon whose heads will inevitably recoil the enslavement of the German proletariat.

I will go further, and say that we would do well to declare openly that the representatives of the workers are definitely opposed to all payment of the so-called reparations, and that they regard the Peace Treaty of Versailles as a lie and a mockery. The stipulation that Germany should pay reparations only means in practice that the German working class, and with it the working classes of all lands, must be bled white and pushed down into misery. We should be making a great step forward if the international trade union movement would not only decline all responsibility for the Treaty of Versailles, but actually refuse to have anything to do with it, and refuse also to be any longer a tool—a kind of conciliatory instrument for the "pacific" enforcement of the payment of reparations.

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AFTER THE HULL CONGRESS

By A DELEGATE

THE Hull Congress of the Trade Unions is universally admitted to have been one of the most successful and forward-moving congresses of recent years. It is true that no sensational departures in trade union policy were undertaken, and that much work remains to be done before we have a really united and clear-sighted trade union movement. Nevertheless, in contrast to the spectacle of gibbering futility furnished by previous congresses, the Hull meeting is a big step forward. Several reasons might be adduced for this.

In the first place some of the most notorious reactionaries in the Trade Union Movement have been elevated to positions of importance in the Labour Government, and if they continue to hinder the progress of the workers in that sphere they are no longer able to do so directly in the Trades Union Congress. Secondly, the previous Plymouth Congress had created such intense disgust in the minds of the active workers in the Trade Union Movement that even the most reactionary leaders in the conference were forced to feel that if the Plymouth exhibition was repeated at Hull it would rouse the working class against the existing leadership, with great danger to themselves. Over and above these two causes the main influence playing upon the congress was the rising fighting spirit of the working-class movement, and the spreading of advanced ideas among large sections of the workers which has accompanied this revival of the fighting spirit.

The speech of the chairman of the congress was something more than a re-hash of the stale platitudes which is the customary mixture served up by Trades Union Congress chairmen. True, it was extremely confused, "left-wing" phrases mingled with "right-wing" apologies for the Labour Government. Important questions, such as those connected with the Dawes Report and the struggle of the workers in the Colonies, were mentioned, but

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not faced. The importance of the workshop as the centre of trade union activity was touched upon, but no conclusion for practical activity was drawn. The fact that the workers' struggle is something more than a mere parliamentary struggle is indicated in the following phrase: " Even the Labour Party having a sufficient majority and in power leaves us still confronting Capitalism on the field, capable of resistance and with the will to resist to the last ditch." This is an interesting departure from the ordinary " right-wing " faith in the omnipotence of parliamentary democracy; but again, no conclusions were drawn from this fact, while on many practical questions that were raised before the congress the president took the line of supporting the Labour Government and praising it in an unmeasured fashion.

It would be a mistake, however, to regard Mr. Purcell and the group of trade union leaders whom he speaks for as being consciously insincere. They are, in our opinion, genuinely seeking a new policy which will increase the activity and effectiveness of the Trade Union Movement. They are not quite clear as to what this policy is to be; they are mortally afraid of advancing too far in front of rank and file opinion. Nevertheless, there are a few leaders, like Mr. Purcell, who are not merely right-wingers making concessions to the " left," but who are genuinely seeking to improve the trade unions as a fighting instrument.

The main practical decisions of the congress were connected with the proposals to grant greater power to the General Council, to organise material support for workers in dispute with the employers, to take steps towards the creation of greater unity in the various industries, and to form a Trades Union Congress programme—and the adoption of the suggestion thrown out by the chairman that the British Trade Union Movement should use its influence within the Amsterdam International to call all Labour elements in Europe together with a view to forming one united International. There were also resolutions on the agenda dealing with the affiliation of the Trades Councils and the Unemployed to the Trades Union Congress, but here craft union conservatism was too strong, and those resolutions were defeated for the time being. While therefore a step forward has been taken, much yet

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remains to be done before the British Trade Union Movement is able to fight effectively against trustified capitalism.

To a certain extent the new General Council can do much to further increased activity. While the powers that have been given them are not comprehensive enough to ensure its working as an effective General Staff, if it really uses the power it has in a manner that will increase the effectiveness of the union movement in their struggle the way will be cleared for the granting of further power. If it makes a serious attempt to put into operation the resolution for greater unity it will be able to advance the organisation of the movement materially.

The main urge towards a more effective Trade Union Movement will, however, come from below. The General Council can either help or hamper this urge. What we are facing in the movement to-day is not merely the need for slightly improved machinery but also the need for a new outlook as to the rôle of the trade unions in the struggle of the workers, and also a new leadership which will express that outlook. If the old leadership is merely driven forward unwillingly in new directions, it will not have the same results as would a new leadership supporting the new policy and willingly leading the movement on the new lines.

The task of pushing the movement in this direction falls to the National Minority Movement, which was organised definitely the week before the congress met. While the programme of the Minority Movement did not receive any consideration from the congress, its proposals nevertheless influenced the delegates to a certain extent, and will continue to influence them as the Minority Movement grows.

In this respect it is worth while noticing the remarks of Mr. E. E. Hunter of the Independent Labour Party, who indulged in an all-round sneer at the Trades Union Congress, the Minority Movement and everyone who does not agree with Mr. Hunter, in a recent issue of the *New Leader*. Referring to the Minority Movement he stated that it did not belong to the trade union future, but belonged to the trade union past, and that the Trade Union Movement had to be permeated more with the spirit of Socialism than it is at the present moment.

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The Minority Movement's objective is clearly defined in its programme as the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, and it can hardly be said that this objective has in the recent past been part and parcel of the trade union outlook.

While, however, the Minority Movement has a Socialist objective, it recognises that it is not merely a matter of propagating this objective in the abstract in the hope that some day, somehow, under some circumstances the Trade Union Movement may seek to realise it. The Minority Movement has for its objective the struggle to develop the movement from its present position to a position when it will accept the revolutionary objective as a matter of deeds, not words. That Minority Movement has had to take the situation as it exists, put forward a series of proposals which will take the workers a step further along the road to the objective that it desires them to reach.

These proposals and objects have been discussed exhaustively in left-wing trade union circles for the past few years. They have sprung directly out of the bitter experiences indergone by the workers in that period. None of them belong to the trade union past, but mark a definite move forward. The immediate programme of the Minority Movement, as far as action is concerned, is a common trade union struggle for definite demands relating to hours and wages. We are not aware that these demands belong to the trade union past. We believe that, on the contrary, the trade union past was dominated by sporadic struggles for sectional aims. We believe that the trade union "present" is still dominated by similar aims, and that the fighting spirit of the workers is being wasted in futile struggles so long as this snarling sectionalism continues. The idea of common struggle, and the creation of machinery which will enable this struggle to be waged effectively, belongs most emphatically to the trade union future.

Mr. Hunter is no doubt disappointed in the fact that the Minority Movement would not draw up a purely decorative programme for theorists to admire. The Minority Movement is, however, definitely of the opinion that it is much more important to unite the working class around a common demand arising from working-class needs than it is to draw up a window-dressing

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programme that no one is likely to pay the slightest attention to, and which does not lead to action in any way.

The Minority Conference also laid down lines for the closest linking up of the forces between the employed and the unemployed, which has already been partly realised, but which we hope will be realised to an even greater extent in the future. This does not belong to the trade union past. In the trade union past the unemployed were an industrial reserve army continually used by the capitalist class for the forcing down of wages. As unemployment is still with us—nay, still increases—a development of policy on those lines is most important.

With regard to the structural changes in the Trade Union Movement which were suggested by the Minority Committee, it is true that many of the things advocated have been more or less frequent features of left-wing proposals in the trade unions in recent years. They must cease to become proposals and become part of the machinery of the union movement.

If the trade unions have to struggle for Socialism, then the machinery of workers' control must be developed in the only place where it can effectively function, namely, the workshop. The Minority Conference discussed this most important phase of trade union activity, arrived at a programme with regard to setting up workshop committees, and is immediately going to undertake a nation-wide campaign for the popularising of this programme. The workshop is important inasmuch as it provides a rallying place for the workers. Here the workers divided into different craft unions as a consequent development are forced to co-operate together in the service of one employer. If we can establish the co-operation of the workers through an all-inclusive workshop or factory committee which will deal with questions of non-unionism, with the enforcement of Factory Acts and trade union regulations, with the extension of workers' control over the discharge and taking on of employees, then we are creating an instrument which will be much more important in the struggle for Socialism than any theoretical theses drawn up by an intellectual burning the midnight oil previous to going to an I.L.P. Summer School to place before that assembly the thousand-and-first method of painlessly transforming Capitalism into Socialism.

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The workshop committee movement is also important in that recent trade union developments have clearly increased the power of the trade union bureaucracy and lessened the power of the workers. The workers, through their committees in the workshops, must be stimulated into taking a greater interest in working-class affairs and so help to eliminate the bureaucracy in trade union headquarters. Not only so, but situations are constantly arising, and will do so in the future, when the workers are coming to serious grips with Capitalism, where it is necessary for the workers to take speedy mass action. The old trade union machinery is not sufficiently capable to enable this to be done, and consequently a new organ which will rally the workers quickly for the mass struggle is necessary. That organ is the workshop committee. It will be clearly understood by every worker that if we can unite the workers in the workshops that unity secured at the bottom will impress unity upon the trade union officials at the top, and that we will be able to have, instead of the hundreds of competing unions, a few large industrial unions based on the workshop, with a minimum of bureaucracy.

The other part of the programme of the Minority Movement which is important is that of transforming the Trades Councils from merely local electioneering bodies into local general staffs dealing with all sections of the workers' struggles. Several important Trades Councils have already taken steps in this direction—London, for example—and many more are likely to follow when the power of the Minority Movement increases. This development is opposed by those who would like to see the local movement develop into a mere agency for advancing careerists to positions on political bodies, but to the workers who realise that the workers' struggle is not merely a parliamentary struggle, but a struggle of the mass, it is a development of the very utmost importance. In the transformed Trades Councils, which deal with all phases of the workers' activities, we will develop the new local leadership which is so essential if we are to have a real solid movement. It is only by increasing the functions of the Trades Councils and giving the active workers in them the necessary experiences that we will be able to create a really effective mass movement.

The giving of more power to the General Council is also a

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step in this direction. It must not be considered as isolated from all the previous steps to effect unity which have been taken in the workshops, but must be the culmination of all those efforts to create a real united movement. It will be the task of the Minority Movement, in spite of the sneers of political theorists, to popularise this programme, to win over and organise the many discontented working-class elements in the Trade Union Movement who realise the difficulties of that movement but who are not too clear as to how they should be remedied.

Those elements will be grouped, not merely around a general programme, but also around a programme which will face the necessities of their respective industries.

Thus when the General Council is trying to create unity from the top, the pressure from the workshops and the pressure from the various union branches grouped in the Minority Movement—the pressure, in fact, of " the united front from below "—will create unity much more speedily than has been the case previously.

In attending to these concrete aims, and to others which may be adopted from time to time to suit the changing circumstances of the struggle, the Minority Movement has the task of spreading among the workers a sane revolutionary understanding, particularly as to the rôle that the Trade Union Movement must play in the workers' struggles. Every movement on the trade union field must be made after full consideration of the situation that faces the workers in this country at the present moment, and of the immediate measures that are necessary to deal with that situation. The Minority Movement will not for a moment countenance the dangerous division between political and industrial work. The theory which is expressed by Mr. Hunter in his article that it is the business of the Labour Party to deal with political matters, and the trade unions to deal with industrial matters, is foolish and futile. We cannot have at the present moment a large-scale industrial struggle without the political element entering into it. We cannot have a real mass struggle leading up to the formation of a Workers' Government unless the organisations in the unions and the workshops are playing their part in that struggle.

Such matters as the question of Imperialism and the Dawes Report are not merely questions which can be passed over to the

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Labour Party as being an electoral machine, but are questions which must be taken into consideration by the Trade Union Movement, not merely mapping out the part which the trade unions are going to play in the struggle for power, but also in mapping out the part that they are going to play in the partial day-to-day struggles.

The greatest mistake which the Hull Congress made was in refusing to face the situation created by the existence of a Labour Government which occupies its present position, not in virtue of having defeated the capitalists, but because of an arrangement arrived at by the capitalists amongst themselves.

Mr. Purcell, in his presidential speech, expressed amazement at the fact that while Labour Governments were coming into existence all over the world, the power of the financier was growing.

If Mr. Purcell had inquired further into the matter he would have realised that there are only two courses open to a Labour Government which takes office, not as the result of a victorious struggle, but with the consent of the capitalists. A Government in this position has either to do what the capitalists expect it to, or it has to rally the masses for a struggle which will lead to the overthrow of the capitalists and the setting up of a real Workers' Government.

The Labour Party has taken the first course. It is a course which will land the Trade Union Movement into disaster. It is imbecile for the Trade Union Movement to refuse to take such developments into consideration. The Minority Movement will work to get the Trade Union Movement to push the present Labour Government towards the fight with capitalism, at the same time helping to prepare it for the mass struggle for power.

The Minority Movement will then carry out three tasks:—

The task of creating the united front of the workers in the struggle for immediate demands.

The task of bringing about structural alterations in the Trade Union Movement.

The task of creating a revolutionary outlook and of developing

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a new leadership which will express that outlook in the Trade Union Movement.

We are confident that if the active workers who have been discontented, who have been struggling in a sporadic fashion, will rally to the Minority Movement and assist in its work, then the next Trades Union Congress which takes place will be as big an advance upon the Hull Congress as the Hull Congress was upon that of Plymouth.

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The World of Labour

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Labour Movement and the Presidential Elections

THE political development of the American Labour Movement since the Farmer-Labour convention at Chicago in July, 1923, has not led to the formation of the hoped-for united Farmer-Labour Party on a national scale. That convention, under the dominating influence of the Workers' Party, formed the Federated Farmer-Labour Party[1]: but the Federated Party did not develop into a centralised national Party, and remained in effect a propaganda organisation which set itself the task of giving some sort of direction to the scattered anti-capitalist forces among the workers and farmers for the 1924 campaign for a Labour Party. The presidential elections, of course, fall due this November.

In November, 1923, a conference was held at St. Paul, in which the Workers' Party and six or seven State Farmer-Labour Parties participated, and which elected an Arrangements Committee to organise the 1924 campaign. A call was issued for a national Farmer-Labour convention to be held at St. Paul on May 30.

This call, propagated with great vigour in the daily organ of the Workers' Party, *The Daily Worker* (founded in January of the present year), met with a considerable response: indeed, it seemed that the response was beginning to assume the character of a genuine mass movement.

Accordingly, those elements in the Labour movement which were unwilling to see the formation of a Labour Party under the militant leadership of the Workers' Party devoted their energies to propagating the old classical Gompers "non-partisan" policy—"rewarding Labour's friends and punishing Labour's enemies"—through the Conference for Progressive Political Action.[2] The great railroad Unions, who have always been the most potent influence in the C.P.P.A., were desirous of supporting William G. McAdoo as Democratic candidate for the Presidency. However, the unfortunate association of Mr. McAdoo with the Teapot Dome oil scandal threw the issue into doubt. Whereupon the C.P.P.A., at its meeting at St. Louis in February, called a

[1] The Labour Monthly, September, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 182-185.

[2] The Labour Monthly, February, 1923, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 122-123.

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convention for July 4 at Cleveland. It refused to co-operate with the St. Paul committee for the organisation of a single all-in convention.

Meanwhile, Senator La Follette had come out against the St. Paul convention, and a struggle began on the St. Paul Committee itself between the supporters of La Follette and the Workers' Party. The latter had a difficult fight to maintain unity. La Follette wanted the Convention postponed: and the date was ultimately altered from May 30 to June 17. Finally, on May 28, La Follette made public a letter denouncing the St. Paul Convention because of the participation of the (Communist) Workers' Party.

The St. Paul Convention, which duly met on June 17, was attended by five to six hundred delegates, of whom 127 were from the State of Minnesota alone. From the first the Convention was sharply divided on the questions of support for La Follette and the immediate organisation of a national party. The Workers' Party eventually succeeded in getting the Convention to agree to a programme of immediate demands, drawn up on a class struggle basis, and to the formation of a campaign committee which should definitely organise the Farmer-Labour Party on a national scale after the elections.

The programme was very similar to that adopted by the Federated Farmer-Labour Party last year,[3] with the addition of clauses on the Negro problem, and on Imperialism and Foreign Affairs, demanding the recognition of Soviet Russia and full self-determination for all American colonies.

Duncan McDonald, a miner, and William Bouck, a farmer, were nominated by the Convention as its Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates respectively: and the Committee was instructed to negotiate with the C.P.P.A on the question of a united ticket.

On the La Follette issue the position of the Workers' Party was made clear in a statement that—

> in the coming negotiations between the National Committee of the Farmer-Labour Party and other groups relative to combined action upon a presidential candidate, the only basis upon which the Workers' Party will accept La Follette as a candidate is, if he agrees to run as the Farmer-Labour candidate, to accept that Party's platform and its control over his electoral campaign and campaign funds.

When the Cleveland Convention met on July 4, it signally failed to comply with any of these desiderata. Attended by 650 delegates, of whom no less than 339 directly or indirectly represented the railroad Unions, by delegates from the Liberal "Committee of forty-eight," from over seventy Trade Unions and other Labour bodies, from Co-operative groups, from the Socialist Party, from a score of miscellaneous political organisations, including three delegates from the old Party of Daniel De Leon, the "revolutionary Marxist" Socialist Labour Party—the Convention from its opening moments revealed itself as completely dominated by the personality of Senator La Follette.

Judging from the Press reports the atmosphere of the Convention was a combination of unbounded and universal enthusiasm for La Follette with a resuscitation of the glories of 1776 and the Declaration of Independence. La Follette was nominated for President on his own personal programme—of a nebulous "progressive" character, the keystone of it being the sentence:

[3] The Labour Monthly, September, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 185.

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"We are unalterably opposed to any class government." Co-operation with the St. Paul Committee was naturally refused.

The question of organising a Party was left over till January, 1925, and the choice of a Vice-Presidential candidate was virtually left to La Follette: he chose Senator Wheeler, a "progressive" Democrat and the first exposer of the Teapot Dome scandal. Senator La Follette has latterly received the official endorsement of the American Federation of Labour.

The Socialist Party, the "advanced" Unions such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Farmer-Labour organisations, all participated in this complete surrender to the personal dictatorship of Senator La Follette. The effect of this was to precipitate a serious crisis among the followers of St. Paul, and to raise doubts as to the advisability of running Farmer-Labour candidates against La Follette.

This led the Workers' Party to decide on putting forward its own candidates, which was done by a specially summoned National Party Conference on July 10. William Z. Foster was nominated for President and Benjamin Gitlow for Vice-President. The St. Paul Committee withdrew the candidatures of MacDonald and Bouck, and a majority of the Committee signed a statement calling upon all Farmer-Labour adherents to support the Workers' Party candidates.

The Position of the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party held its Convention at Cleveland after the convention of the C.P.P.A. An address to the members of the Party was drawn up in which, after adverting to "the inspiration of the Labour Government in England, the Socialist Government in Denmark and of the recent elections in France and Australia," the C.P.P.A. was characterised as:—

> The first national, political outpouring of the toilers of America. While a Labour Party has not been formed in name . . . a party of Labour is being realised in fact. The first great step has been taken. Relations with the capitalist parties have been broken. The rest will inevitably follow.
>
> By an overwhelming vote of the convention of the Socialist Party it was decided that our place is in this political revolt of the American workers. . . .
>
> It is likewise our duty to maintain the autonomy and integrity of the Socialist Party, and as an organised party to continue with renewed energy and in larger fields our mission of enlightenment and our struggle for the complete release of humanity from the thraldom of capitalism.

The consecration of this American *Bloc des Gauches* was achieved by a special message from the veteran Eugene V. Debs, who wrote :—

> I think it wise for our party to make no nominations under the circumstances, but at the same time to hold the Socialist Party intact, adhere rigidly to its principles and keep the red flag flying . . .
>
> In this crisis, as in the past, the Socialist Party is the party of the working class and faces the future with absolute confidence and without fear.

However, Mr. Debs wrote in the same issue of the New York Socialist organ, *The New Leader*, which carried his above-quoted remarks :—

> I have to confess frankly that with certain features of the convention of the Progressive elements and with certain actions in their proceedings I could not possibly, under ordinary circumstances, find myself in agreement. . . .

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> But the situation that confronted our delegates at Cleveland was . . . indeed unprecedented and extraordinary in every sense of the term. . . .
>
> No fundamental principle of Socialism has been or will be compromised. . . .
>
> Though he is not a Socialist we need not blush or apologise to give our support to Robert M. La Follette in the life-giving and hope-inspiring struggle of the present hour. All his life he has stood up like a man for the right according to his light, &c.

He adumbrated this position in a second letter to the delegates of the Socialist Convention. He denied emphatically that the Socialist Party had been " wrecked " by its decision to support La Follette, and evoked the authority of Lenin for " wise compromise and masterly retreat." He had previously appealed to the shades of Marx, Engels and Liebknecht.

A writer in one of the American Labour periodicals heads a note on the rôle of the Socialist Party in the Cleveland Convention: " The Exit of the Socialist Party." This appears to be a fair comment.

THE FAR EAST

Pacific Transport Workers' Conference

AT the end of last June the Red International of Labour Unions convened, at Canton, the first Conference of Transport Workers of the Pacific Ocean. The conference was attended by representatives of the railwaymen and seamen of Northern and Southern China, of the Philippine Islands and Java.

Apart from discussions on trade union organisation and propaganda, the conference devoted its chief attention to the formation of a united anti-militarist and anti-imperialist front.

The real proletarian left wing in the conference was represented by the North China and Javan railwaymen, both of whom have, in the past two years, fought severe strikes in the teeth of unbelievably savage Government repression. The position of the North China railwaymen is illustrated by the fact that their delegates were only able to be present at the conference illegally.

These elements demanded a united anti-imperialist front under a definitely revolutionary leadership—that of the working class or that of the Communist-influenced left wing within the national revolutionary movement. Against this point of view the fraternal delegate of the Kuo-Ming-Tang (the Chinese national revolutionary party led by Sun Yat Sen) proposed a general united front of all sections of the oppressed Eastern peoples, ignoring the social and class distinctions. This was supported by the delegates from the Philippine Transport Workers' Union and the " Labour Legion."

The South China (Hong Kong) seamen took up a position midway between these two extremes.

A manifesto to the toilers of the Far East and to the workers of Europe and America was issued by the conference. Its chief passages were as follows:—

> Since the world imperialist war six years have elapsed. All the promises made by the big Capitalist Governments to the oppressed nations of the East, whose man-power, raw materials and other necessities were taken in order to help win the war, were not only not fulfilled and the promised independence not given, but instead, in almost all the colonies and semi-colonial countries,

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the imperialists strengthened their oppressive governmental apparatus, increased their military punitive forces on land and sea and assumed a more high-handed colonial policy.

In this respect there is no fundamental difference between the policies of all the imperialist States. The oppression of Korea by the semi-feudal and militarist Government of Japan; the oppression of British India by the so-called Labour Government of England, which is in fact a bloc of Labour aristocracy and Liberal bourgeoisie transacting the affairs of British finance capital; the oppression of the Philippine Islands by "democratic" America; the oppression of the East Indian islands by Holland and the united oppression of China by all the imperialists, all have the same exploiting aim, all bring great sufferings to the oppressed peoples, depriving them of the possibility to live and develop freely. . . .

The imperialists are particularly watchful regarding the development of the Labour Movement in the colonies and semi-colonies, and there is no limit to their cruel persecution and suppression of the organised workers, especially those engaged in transport.

The history of recent years is full of examples. It is sufficient to recall the strike on the Peking-Hankow railroad in February, 1922, when workers by the score were killed by soldiers; labour leaders were decapitated in public at railway stations and hundreds of workers were sentenced to many years' imprisonment. Or to recall the strike of the Hongkong seamen, in the same year, when the British Government murdered many of them and instituted mass arrests. It is sufficient to recall the strike of the railwaymen of Java in May, 1923,[1] when the Dutch Government set in motion its entire military and police apparatus in order to wreck the best, most revolutionary and compact organisation of the Javanese proletariat, declaring martial law and ordering mass arrests and deportations of active workers. It is enough to recall the events in North China, this May, when five railwaymen of the Peking-Hankow line were shot by General Wu-Pei-Fu because they were active in both the organised Labour and nationalist movements.

The imperialists of all countries know very well the significance of working-class organisation in liberating the oppressed nations and classes, and attack vengefully even the beginnings of a Labour Movement.

Toiling masses of the East! Revolutionary proletarians of Europe and America! We, the representatives of the transport workers of the East, declare that the best proof that the peoples of the East can and will govern themselves lies in the very fact that they are now conducting a revolutionary struggle for independence. The imperialists will not grant independence to any subject people voluntarily.

We further declare that the toiling masses in the colonies and semi-colonies will achieve their national, economic and political independence only as a result of an organised struggle against world imperialism, against native feudalists, militarists and capitalists who compromise with the imperialists.

Such an organised struggle of the colonial peoples against imperialism necessitates the formation of militant peoples' parties in the colonies, consisting of workers, peasants, intellectuals and non-propertied classes in the cities. Such parties will not only unite the struggling forces for independence inside the colonies, but will bring the colonies into closer contact with each other, and will also bring the national revolutionary movements of the East in contact with the world revolutionary Labour Movement.

[1] The Labour Monthly, August, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 114-115.

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An Important Announcement

THE LABOUR MONTHLY has been fortunately able to make arrangements for an authoritative translation of LENIN'S book, entitled *On the Road to Insurrection*, not hitherto available in English, which is of the greatest value and interest to the working-class movement, especially in its present stage in this country.

Our readers are informed that this work will be published in the form of a series of articles exclusively in THE LABOUR MONTHLY, the first instalment appearing next month.

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TO EDITORS

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74 Swinton Street, Gray's Inn Road
London, W.C. 1

Telegrams: Edcalopres, Kincros, London
Telephone: Museum 1311
Museum 7777

Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1, and Printed by the London Caledonian Press Ltd., 74 Swinton Street, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1.—W 8181

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